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AIDS It Challenges and Summons All of Us

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Since the early 1980s when the first cases of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) appeared, all of humanity has been transfixed by the importance of this disease and everything it represents to the person who suffers from it, to the medical community, and to all of society.

So many important human issues are inextricably entwined with AIDS (the disease caused by HIV) – culture, human sexuality, private morality, public ethics, education, freedom, religious experience, respect, personal and social responsibility, compassion, life, death, science.

Society has realized great scientific advances and enormous progress in the social management and medical therapies used to prevent new infections and to treat people already infected with the virus. Similar to the medicinal discoveries, research on the virus has come a long way. Today, our statistical achievements show the degree to which the number of new infections has decreased. At the same time, life expectancies have increased, thanks to new drugs, for carriers of the virus.

For almost 40 years, the social and medical fight against this disease has continued -- and medicine has called no truce in the development of new drugs that fight AIDS ever more accurately and with fewer harmful side effects – in an effort to alleviate suffering and improve the quality of life for those who carry the HIV virus. Today, no medical cure exists for this disease, and despite all the medical research that has been done, much more remains to do.

Nevertheless, there has been progress in the understanding, tolerance and social services offered to those infected and to their family and social settings.

But, we must repeat, again and again: "In addition to fighting the disease scientifically, clinically, and humanitarily, we must accept as a fact that in the vast majority of cases, there is an interdependence between infection by the AIDS virus and certain behaviors or lifestyles." (1)



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Today, we applaud the medical advances already discovered in the prevention and treatment of AIDS and yet state, at the same time, the fact that limiting ourselves to considering solely medical-scientific and pharmacological topics is not sufficient. What's needed is a culture and education that assists in the management and prevention of the situations created by the AIDS pandemic. The family, the media, the churches and all of society must be involved at the educational levels that enable an abundance of life for citizens. AIDS should make us question our values and lifestyles that this critical and transitory historical, social and cultural juncture between modernity and postmodernity exalts, motivates, and proposes.

However, "to AIDS patients, the role of society, of its institutions and of each one of its people, can only be the one adopted with a sick person: solidarity, acceptance and support. AIDS patients have the same human rights as healthy people. And, one more: solely for being sick – to be cared for and to be the beneficiaries of the solidarity of others, which entails the corresponding effort of all social institutions and public authorities. Rejecting AIDS patients, just for being AIDS patients, in school, in the workplace, in public service or social institutions, is inhumane and unjust. Society is surely required, with its sick and suffering, to bring together all means at its disposal to make life as bearable as possible for them. In return, society has a right to demand of AIDS patients that they avoid the risks that transmit this disease. This solidarity must also put forth the financial means for research that produces treatments, and reception centers or hospitals for when the disease reaches its terminal phase, etc. " (2)

We must all feel invested in the prevention of this serious pandemic, especially the people and groups considered most at risk of being infected. We must all feel called to strive for a culture of life among so many forms of death and human destruction.

1.- II La sociedad ante el Sida en <https://www.aciprensa.com/sida/libro4.htm> 2.- Ibid.