



HIV/AIDS in South Africa

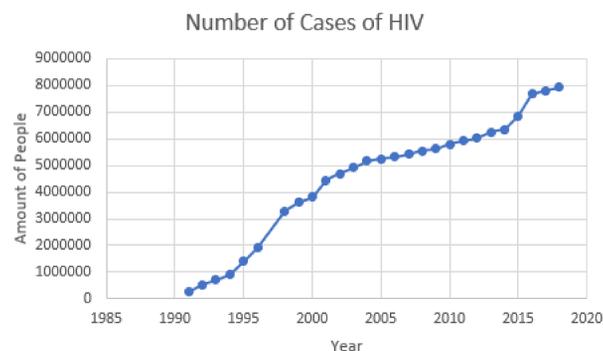
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Introduction

With 2021 being the 40-year anniversary of HIV/AIDS, it is important to look back and see the sheer vastness of this disorder and how it has affected people. With Africa having the most devastating rates of HIV in the world, there is an even darker spot seen in Southern Africa, specifically the country of South Africa. From 1997-2019, South Africa had the highest global ranking of HIV/AIDS in the world and was outranking almost every other country in terms of people living with HIV, people getting HIV, and people dying from AIDS (STATISTA global, 2020).

Magnitude

To put it into perspective globally, South Africa is home to 20% of the individuals living with HIV, and that is out of 195 countries in the world. Out of the 57.8 million people living in this country, 7.8 million of them are living with HIV, and those are just the ones that are reported. This shows a 19.1% prevalence rate among adults aged 15 to 49. (UNAIDS, 2021). There are then over 83,000 adult and child deaths due to AIDS



Contextual Factors

Contextual Factors are categories that have specific causes and determinants that attribute to the continuous spread and Transmission of HIV in South Africa. These contextual factors include social, economic, cultural, political, historical, and geographic.

Social

- o Discrimination
 - o Gender Inequality
 - o Violence against women
 - o "these men don't respect us. Women in our community are being raped and killed. Some men who perpetrate these crimes are out on bail the following day." (UN Women 2020).
- o LGBT+ Community
 - o MSM
 - o People being able to report their sexual orientation and get treatment without fear of violence

Economic

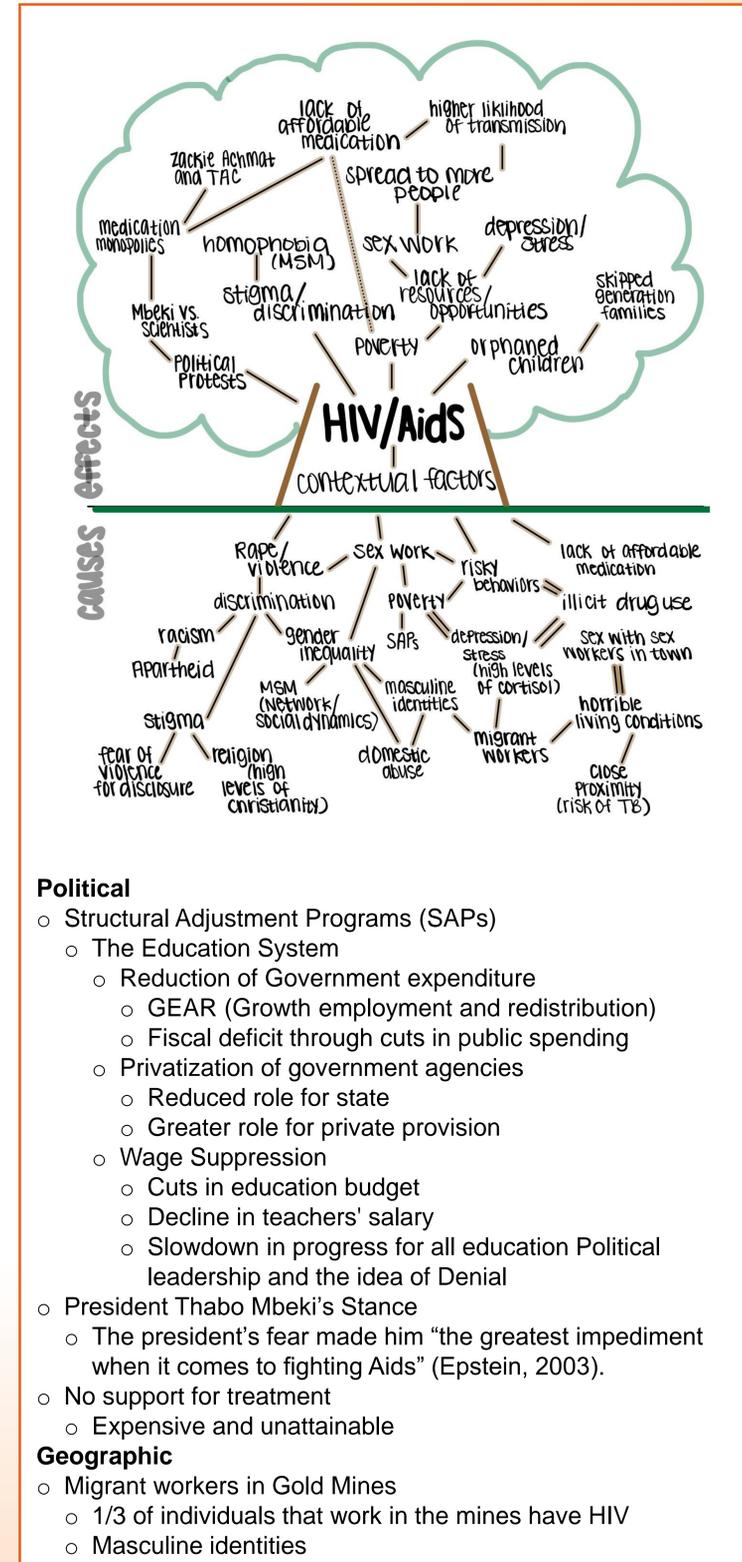
- o "Money acts as a resource pathway for instability and a high-risk lifestyle and it also prevent the access to healthcare"
- o Sex Work
 - o ~24,000 reported sex workers
 - o Positive prevalence- 57.7%
- o Wealth Inequalities
 - o "being held up as the most unequal country globally." (Fox, 2010).
 - o Gini Index- 63.0
- o Orphaned Children
 - o Over 7 million in South Africa
 - o May have HIV themselves

Cultural

- o Religion
 - o "1980 census figures suggested that out of a total population of roughly 30 million people in South Africa 76.6 per cent were affiliated with some form of Christianity" (Chidester, 2014)
 - o Stigma and discrimination

Historical

- o Apartheid
 - o Major racial violence
 - o For black minority
 - o Limited access to healthcare
 - o No preventative education
 - o No post-virus treatment
 - o No opportunities for jobs
 - o Poor housing
 - o Overcrowding
 - o Stress and Depression



Political

- o Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs)
 - o The Education System
 - o Reduction of Government expenditure
 - o GEAR (Growth employment and redistribution)
 - o Fiscal deficit through cuts in public spending
 - o Privatization of government agencies
 - o Reduced role for state
 - o Greater role for private provision
 - o Wage Suppression
 - o Cuts in education budget
 - o Decline in teachers' salary
 - o Slowdown in progress for all education Political leadership and the idea of Denial
- o President Thabo Mbeki's Stance
 - o The president's fear made him "the greatest impediment when it comes to fighting Aids" (Epstein, 2003).
 - o No support for treatment
 - o Expensive and unattainable

Geographic

- o Migrant workers in Gold Mines
 - o 1/3 of individuals that work in the mines have HIV
 - o Masculine identities

Intervention

Zackie Achmat and the TAC

TAC, treatment action campaign, was started to try and shed light on all the problems related to HIV and specifically fought for the access of antiretroviral therapy medications. A leader of this campaign, Zackie Achmat eventually stopped taking his own medications at the risk of dying himself, because he believed that no one should be able to take them unless everyone had access to them. To a public committee in December 1999, he stated "that probably means I will die a horrible death, even though medical science has made it unnecessary." (Nolen, 2007). This created waves of support from people across the country with them finally realizing how serious this was. Achmat also smuggled in illegal ART's that he provided to people and then got arrested for because he was fighting big pharma (Pfizer had a patent monopoly on these drugs which made it extremely expensive).

At this point, education can not be the only thing people push for to fix this epidemic. Of course, education is good to have, but this is too big. Some examples of things that may help are:

- **Housing for migrant workers**
 - Larger rooms with less people
 - Better quality of life
 - Allow for more time and space for family
- **Protection of children**
 - Organization and policies put in place
 - Providing counseling and therapy

Treatment

- **Antiretroviral Therapy (ARTs)**
 - 5-year ART rollout program
 - Largest ART program in the world
- **Preexposure prophylaxis (PrEP)**
 - Clinical Trials
 - Demonstration Projects
 - Large-Scale implementation initiative
 - 2016- National launch of Oral PrEP for sex workers.
- **SAINT Trial**
 - Strop transmission from mother to child
 - Making it only a 33% chance of transmission

As of 2010, the CDC South Africa reported that around 1.6 million people received HIV testing and more than 800,000 people received ART therapy. (CDC South Africa, 2011).