



## Questions and Answers (Current Trends)

Q. What will happen in Africa?

A. Although the statistics are very high, it has been thought that the amount of new infections of HIV peaked in the 1990's for Africa. This means that many countries new infection levels are stabilizing, and in some cases decreasing – Kenya and Zimbabwe. However, a stable infection rate does not mean the pandemic is moving away, in fact it just means that the amount of people being newly infected equals the amount of people dying of AIDS.

Q. What about other countries?

A. There are places of high concern today, where new HIV transmissions are growing at high rates. These two regions are Eastern Europe and the 'Golden Triangle' of Southeast Asia. HIV/AIDS has been found in every country of the world, while most countries have low-level prevalence rates. This does not mean, however, that certain countries have "beat" HIV/AIDS. Countries like Senegal, Thailand, and Brazil are working very hard to keep their epidemics from expanding and trying to reduce the amount of new infections.

Q. What about a cure?

A. Currently there is no cure or vaccine for HIV/AIDS. There is research on-going in several fields. Testing of potential vaccines is happening right now. Previous attempts have not had great success, and even if one of the current attempts were to have positive results it would be years before it became ready for use. Education, prevention, treatment, and care will remain focal in the field for those working to change the pandemic of HIV/AIDS.

Q. What about other things?

A. A microbicide gel is being developed, which will be placed in the vagina to prevent HIV transmission. Studies and research have been on-going for this product for sometime and many hope one will be ready for use within the coming few years. The drive for such a product revolves around the fact that it is female controlled, as opposed to the current prevention technique of condoms that is largely male controlled.

Q. Who is paying all this?

A. The Global Fund for Malaria, TB, and HIV/AIDS has been a source of funding, as well as private organizations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Estimates show, and the continued increase in HIV infections prove, that the world's current efforts are not enough. Research, prevention, treatment, care, and support are all vitally important and the world has yet to reach the needed demand so that the HIV/AIDS pandemic can be altered in such a way that new infections as well as HIV/AIDS deaths drastically decrease.