AIDS

Student Worksheet

The following answers are based on pages 28–31:

1. What does AIDS stand for?
   
   **Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome.**

2. Where were the first cases of AIDS seen and in whom?
   
   **The first cases of AIDS were seen in young, homosexual men in Haiti and North America.**

3. What is the cause of AIDS?
   
   **AIDS is caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), which weakens the human immune system, making the victim more vulnerable to disease.**

4. As yet, there is no cure for AIDS, but some drugs can help. Which drug is most commonly used to treat AIDS patients?
   
   **AZT (azidothymidine) is the most commonly used drug to treat AIDS. However, recent clinical trials have indicated that the effects of the drug may not last longer than a few months, as the virus becomes resistant to it.**

5. List three ways in which AIDS can be spread:

   (i) The exchange of bodily fluids during sexual intercourse (both heterosexual and homosexual).
   (ii) The sharing of syringes among drug abusers.
   (iii) The treatment of patients (e.g. haemophiliacs) with contaminated blood or blood products.

   *Other: passage of the virus between a pregnant mother and her unborn child.*

6. List the precautions that may be taken (either by individuals or society) to avoid the spread of AIDS by the routes outlined in (5) above:

   (i) The practice of protected sex (e.g. by the use of condoms) within both heterosexual and homosexual groups.
   (ii) The issuing of sterile syringes to drug addicts.
   (iii) The screening of potential blood donors for the HIV virus.

   *Other: the issuing of AZT to pregnant HIV-positive women may prevent transmission of the virus to the baby.*
7. List four ways in which someone’s life would change if they caught AIDS:

(i) Upon first being diagnosed as HIV-positive, the sufferer would require counselling to help them to come to terms with their condition.

(ii) People who carry the AIDS virus encounter a host of prejudices from society as a whole; for example, they may find it difficult to find work or to secure a life insurance policy due to the terminal nature of their illness.

(iii) AIDS patients may be unable to work due to their condition and will therefore require sickness and housing benefits.

(iv) Upon the development of full-blown AIDS, the patient would need medical care, either at home or in hospital.