

AIDS Education Must Focus on Prevention

by Ron Harris

By the end of 1991, the AIDS virus is likely to be present in the blood of 5 to 10 million Americans according to Dr. Robert Redfield, an infectious-disease specialist at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington. As many experts now believe that up to half of those infected will eventually die of the virus, public opinion that the government should be devoting more effort and resources to this national crisis (per a Gallup-Newsweek Poll) is well justified.

In light of such revelations, the official projections of 270,000 cumulative cases of AIDS in the next five years are now considered unrealistically low. For these government projections do not include estimates of AIDS-Related Complex, a disease syndrome, sometimes fatal in itself, which is almost invariably a precursor of AIDS. And they also assume that only those Americans who are already infected with the virus will get AIDS by 1991.

Progress against AIDS has been phenomenal in the few short years since the disease was discovered. The virus causing it has been identified and a drug found—azidothymidine or AZT—which controls some of the symptoms. With Food and Drug Administration approval, AZT is now available upon prescription at an annual retail cost of about \$10,000. But finding a cure for those infected with AIDS or a vaccine to protect the rest of the population is years, and perhaps even decades away.

The problem researchers face in developing a vaccine appear in many ways almost insurmountable. The AIDS virus attaches itself to the cells of the immune system like microscopic parasites. It has an ever-changing genetic structure and mutates into hundreds of different strains, making counter-attack by antibodies almost futile. If one AIDS strain is killed, numerable others continue unabated in their onslaught.

As well, vaccines traditionally work by stimulating the body's immune system. But in the case of AIDS, that system has already lost with the onset of the disease. There is nothing to strengthen.

One hope on the horizon is an apparently harmless AIDS-related virus—HTLV-IV—discovered in West Africa. Research on chimpanzees is currently underway at the Harvard School of Public Health to see if this will create a natural defense against AIDS. But even if a vaccine was discovered tomorrow—highly unlikely at the current rate of progress—it would take over 5 years just to test it. Meanwhile, millions of Americans will be at risk.

As the death toll from AIDS continues to mount, civil rights and liberties may fall by the wayside. Already the possibility of mandatory AIDS testing and compulsory quarantine already being discussed in publications such as the Wall Street Journal. Some experts see the future as a race between the search for a medical cure and the political demands that will inevitably disrupt our free society.

In a growing climate of alarm, the importance of AIDS education has been recognized as our current mainline defense against the epidemic. Until now, this has mainly focused on sex education, including the use of condoms, and what amounts to the promotion of a new morality for our society. But there is now a growing body of evidence that indicates that AIDS education should probably cover far more, that in fact there are positive steps that might reduce the risk of developing AIDS even if sexually or intravenously exposed to the virus.

The key appears to lie in the fact that half of those who have the AIDS virus do not come down with the disease. And now there is growing evidence that some measures might reduce the disease rate significantly, perhaps even as low as 1-in-10.

At a conference at Boston University in May 1986, new research was presented which showed that proper diet (in this case macrobiotically based) could not only strengthen the immune system, but in some cases possibly even "cure" those with AIDS. Researchers at the Department of Microbiology at Boston University had studied one group of AIDS sufferers who were put on a strict "macrobiotic" dietary regime instead of the usual drugs, and who were encouraged to exercise, do rewarding work, and to develop satisfying relationships. In two years, rather than their white blood cell count continuing to diminish, signifying a decline in the immune system, the researchers found that the average white blood cell count more than doubled. (The average calculated white cells number per cubic millimeter increased from 1122 at diagnosis of AIDS to 2584—still low, but the reverse trend to the usual course of AIDS.)

Doctors at Boston University are so far cautious in their conclusions because there are several possible explanations. But Dr. Martha Cottrell, director of student health at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York, who observed this particular study for some time, believes that a new view of AIDS must be developed.

She says up to now most research has focused on the fact that AIDS is caused by a virus. Thus the way to prevent the disease is to prevent transmission of the offending microbe and the way to cure the disease is to destroy the virus.

But she points out that the secondary cause of AIDS is the underlying biological condition of the individual, particularly an immune system that has been abused and rendered ineffective. She suggests that by concentrating on strengthening the natural immune system of the body, AIDS might also be prevented.

The ultimate war on AIDS lies in the arena of medical science, either through the discovery of a vaccine or, if pushed to extremes, through the same kind of testing and quarantine procedures that quelled Tuberculosis, according to Dr. David F. Musto of the Yale School of Medicine. (As recently as 1900, TB caused more deaths per hundred thousand Americans than are caused today by all cancers and motor-vehicle deaths combined.)

But it now appears that non-AIDS-related discoveries about the immune system could serve as an important stop-gap measure in reducing the number of AIDS victims.

Both laboratory experiments with animals and human studies have demonstrated that emotional stress can weaken the immune system, reducing the ability of white blood cells to fight germs and viruses. The new medical field of psychoneuroimmunology has emerged to study the relationship between mind and immunity.

Several doctors in Los Angeles and Toronto are even suggesting that *Dianetics* (as detailed in L. Ron Hubbard's current *New York Times* best-seller *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*) could possibly reduce the number of AIDS sufferers.

Back in the late 1940s and early '50s, Dianetics actually led the way in proving that mental factors could influence both the predisposition and precipitation of germ and virus caused disease. Hubbard Discovered that

Tuberculosis and the common cold, for instance, frequently occurred only when a person's mental condition predisposed them to the illness. In such cases, once the mental stress was alleviated through Dianetics techniques, these illnesses seemed to disappear despite their germ and virus basis.

Hubbard also observed in his research that Dianetics clears, those individuals who have "run out" the sub-conscious factors that bring about mental stress and other adverse mental conditions, do not get colds. Given that both the common cold and AIDS are virus based, this might be an additional indication that mental well-being and stamina could play an important role in reducing the tragedy of AIDS.

It is important that public education on AIDS does everything to eliminate panic or worry about the disease, factors which in themselves could directly influence how many people fall victim to the virus. And AIDS education should also provide information on diets that tend to strengthen the immune system. An 'American eat right' campaign wouldn't do any harm and greatly minimize the epidemic.

As in many tragedies bid and small, natural or man-made, the senseless destruction of human life can seem pointless and depressing. But meeting catastrophes head on, with courage and rationality instead of allowing fear to control the day, has always been the successful formula. We have to decide that we can get AIDS under control. We must not close our minds to any possibility that might offer hope in this direction. And finally, we have to decide that AIDS can be conquered quickly and then spare no resources in reaching this objective—until the AIDS epidemic is only a matter for the history books.

AIDS IS SPREAD THROUGH BLOOD, SEMEN AND IGNORANCE.

THE NATIONAL AIDS AWARENESS TEST

I. THE EPIDEMIC

1. A B C
2. YES NO
3. A B
4. A B C
5. A B C
6. A B C
7. A B C D

II. WHO GETS IT

8. TRUE FALSE
9. TRUE FALSE
10. A B C
11. TRUE FALSE

III. HOW YOU GET IT

12. TRUE FALSE
13. TRUE FALSE
14. TRUE FALSE
15. TRUE FALSE
16. TRUE FALSE
17. A B C

IV. SAFE SEX

18. A B C
19. A B C
20. TRUE FALSE
21. TRUE FALSE
22. TRUE FALSE

V. THE BLOODSTREAM

23. TRUE FALSE
24. TRUE FALSE
25. TRUE FALSE
26. TRUE FALSE
27. TRUE FALSE
28. TRUE FALSE
29. TRUE FALSE
30. TRUE FALSE

VI. WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU

31. TRUE FALSE
32. TRUE FALSE
33. TRUE FALSE
34. TRUE FALSE
35. TRUE FALSE
36. TRUE FALSE
37. TRUE FALSE
38. TRUE FALSE

VII. THE COST

39. A B C
40. A B C

VIII. THE BLOOD TEST

41. TRUE FALSE
42. TRUE FALSE
43. A B C
44. A B
45. TRUE FALSE
46. TRUE FALSE

IX. AIDS AND YOU

47. YES NO
48. YES NO
49. YES NO
50. YES NO
51. YES NO
52. YES NO
53. YES NO
54. YES NO
55. YES NO

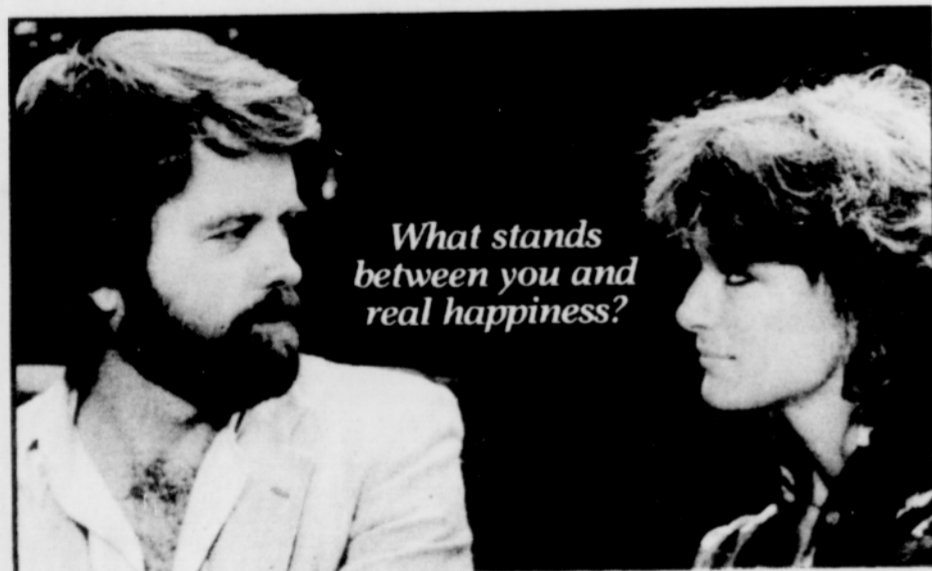
© 1987 Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., N.Y., N.Y.

Brought to you in the public interest by
 **Metropolitan Life**
 AND AFFILIATED COMPANIES

Are you smart enough not to get AIDS? What can you do to protect yourself and your family? Save this form and watch the National AIDS Awareness Test, a unique question-and-answer program featuring top celebrities and America's foremost medical authorities.

Tune in and take a test you can't afford to fail.

Tuesday, Sept. 15, 9 p.m. to 11 p.m. Channel 6



What stands between you and real happiness?

- Do you find yourself continually attracted to people who just aren't good for you?
- Have you had an unexplained urge to break off a relationship just when it was going well?
- Do you have the same argument over and over with your spouse or partner?

There's an unknown part of the mind that can influence the way people act.

It's called the Reactive Mind.

Find out how to understand and handle it in the national best seller Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health by L. Ron Hubbard.

You deserve to be happy. Buy this book, read it and use it to create trust, honesty and happiness.

Just fill out this order form and send it with your check or money order for \$5.00 to:

Portland Celebrity Centre
 and Dianetics Center
 709 S.W. Salmon
 Portland, Oregon 97205
 503-228-0116

YES! Please send me _____ copy(s) of *DIANETICS: The Modern Science of Mental Health* by L. Ron Hubbard

NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____
 STATE _____
 ZIP CODE _____

FOR DIANETICS INFORMATION,
 CALL TOLL FREE
 1 800 367 8788

2A