Global Impact of HIV

The exact time and origin of HIV is still being studied. There are many theories about the origin of HIV, but none of them have been proven to date. The following is a timeline of facts about the development of HIV/AIDS in the world and United States.

Late 1940s/early 1950s: After genetic analysis, scientists postulate that HIV-1 may have developed from a single virus

1959: Analysis of blood sample from a man in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo identified HIV-1

Mid- to late-1970’s: Growing numbers of gay men developed rare types of pneumonia, cancer and other illnesses in the United States (AIDS not identified at this time)

Early 1980’s: HIV & AIDS gained attention in the United States; up to 150,000 people per year became infected

1982: The term “acquired immunodeficiency syndrome” or AIDS was used by public health officials in the United States to describe opportunistic infections seen in previously healthy men

1982: Tracking of AIDS cases began in the United States

1983: HIV was discovered as the cause of AIDS by an international committee

1986: HIV-2 identified in AIDS patients in West Africa (second type of HIV); primarily found in Africa

1987: The first case of HIV-2 infection in the United States was diagnosed

1990’s: Number of people becoming infected with HIV declined to about 40,000 people per year

1996: Introduction of powerful virus-fighting drugs dramatically delay the progression of HIV to AIDS; AIDS related death rate declines by 23% compared to that in 1995

1999: HIV-1 found in chimpanzees native to west equatorial Africa by international researchers; suggesting the spread from chimpanzee to hunters who became exposed to their blood

2006: CDC estimates, about 56,000 people in the United States contracted HIV and that approximately 1.1 million people in the United Stated are living with HIV or AIDS, 21% of whom are not aware that they are infected.