



AIDS A Disease of Non-Racial Discrimination

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As 2019 gradually comes to an end, it is important to reflect on the activities of past 11 months especially in the area of health. The wellbeing of individuals and the society is critical and paramount to the development of a Nation. It is therefore, not surprising that "World AIDS Day" (December 1st) and the National Handwashing Week (December 1st -7th) are chosen as themes for the December 2019, Acta Scientific Microbiology Journal Edition.

December 1st each year is commemorated as World AIDS Day since 1988. This day is one of the 8th official global public health campaigns marked by the World Health Organization (WHO) along side; World Tuberculosis Day (March 20), World Health Day (April 7), World Malaria Day (April 25), World Tobacco Day (May 31), World Blood Donor Day (June 14), World Hepatitis day (July 28) and World Immunization Week (Beginning November 10). The interconnectivity of these days as well as their significance cannot be over emphasized as research have shown that diseases like Tuberculosis, Malaria and Hepatitis are closely associated with the AIDS epidemic.

The earliest reported case of infection with HIV-1 (the causal agent of AIDS) was in the blood samples collected in 1959 from a man in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo. However, how he was infected is still a matter of debate. Some school of thought maintain that there must have been some contact with Apes and/or related species, while others say the virus is another biological warfare created in the laboratory. This notwithstanding, AIDS has been reported to kill between 28m to 40m people worldwide by 2017. It is also estimated that about 37m people are living with the virus. These statistics, undoubtedly makes AIDS one of the most important global public health challenges in recorded history.

However, with increased efficacy of antiretroviral treatments, death rates due to AIDS in many regions of the world have reduced since its peak in 2005. On the other hand, due to reasons of poverty, illiteracy and inadequate Government patronage in some countries, AIDS is still a serious problem that requires serious attention. That is why, awareness drive is still critical. It is in this recognition that the theme for this years World AIDS day is "Communities make the difference". This years World AIDS day commemoration therefore, recognizes the essential role that communities have played and continue to play in AIDS response at different levels of the society. Stakeholders must keep on the fight against AIDS and sustain the awareness.

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