

Islam's View on human life and health.

Human life is considered a gift from Allah and that individuals have been entrusted with life by Allah and therefore have no right to misuse it or abuse it. The Holy Prophet Mohammed and other prophets have stressed the importance of good health. He once said to one of his companions, "O' Abbas ask Allah for health in this world and the next" (Al-Nasa i)

The concept of modesty in Islam.

Modesty in Islam does not mean that we should not discuss sexual matters. Muslim men and women never felt shy to ask the Prophet (pbuh) about intimate sexual matters. The prophet (pbuh) has said, "Blessed are the women of the Ansar, shyness did not stand in their way for seeking knowledge about their religion".

How should Muslims treat people living with HIV/AIDS?

There are many Muslims affected by AIDS. These people are someone's son, daughter, brother or sister: they are part of the Muslim Community. Any person with AIDS should be given attention, care, love and affection so that the person can live their life with dignity. We also have no right to judge and condemn people. As Muslims we know that Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) said: Have compassion towards those who are on earth and the One who is beyond will have compassion towards you.

THE WOMAN AND HIV/AIDS

It is a known fact that in the spread of HIV/AIDS, the receipt (the woman) is more susceptible to getting infected than the incipient (the man).

The role of the woman

- Women who have found themselves in positions of authority should institute policies safeguarding the right/health of the less privileged ones.
- Girls should be allowed to go to school. Education helps a lot in helping them make decisions later in life.
- Mothers should teach their children especially females all they need to know about male-female relationships as they reach puberty.
- Women should be encouraged to seek help, counselling and advice when they need it. Such service providers must be readily accessible to them.
- Every woman has a right to her body when unmarried and when married, a right to protect herself. Dissuade from carnal sex, multiple sex partners and if she must engage in carnal sex, make it safe.

For more information, contact us at

WoManBeing Concern Int.

Tower Bridge Business Complex

100, Clements Road, SE16 4DG

Phone: 0207 7401 306 or info@womanbeing.org

RAISING AWARENESS ON ISSUES
OF HIV/AIDS AMONG AFRICAN
MUSLIM WOMEN THROUGH
MOSQUES IN LAMBETH,
SOUTHWARK AND LEWISHAM



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WoManBeing Concern Int. (WBCI) supported by Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham Primary Care Trusts (PCT) is carrying out a campaign to raise awareness on HIV/AIDS, STI'S to prevent HIV transmission amongst African Muslim Communities.

Objectives of this campaign include:

- To provide accurate information, education and communication materials addressing the issues of HIV/AIDS among the African Muslim Communities in general and especially in Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham.
- To address issues surrounding stigma and discrimination of people living with HIV/AIDS.
- To mobilise Muslim communities to participate in HIV/AIDS prevention.

WoManBeing Concern hopes you will find the information provided in this brochure useful.

FACTS ABOUT HIV/AIDS

1. What is HIV ? (Human Immunodeficiency Virus)

HIV is the virus that weakens the human ability to fight off diseases and infections in the body. When HIV virus enters the human body, the body's defence system responds by creating antibodies to fight the virus. However, with time, the body's defence is weakened and the body can not protect its self anymore from opportunistic diseases and other infections.

2. What is AIDS? (Acquired Immune deficiency syndrome)

After the body's defence system is weakened, opportunistic diseases and infections overpower the body's ability to defend its self, then the person is considered to have developed AIDS.

3. How is HIV transmitted from one person to another?

- Through unprotected sexual intercourse between a man and a woman. (heterosexual)
- Through unprotected sexual intercourse between two men. (homosexual)
- Through sharing needles, and other sharp equipment with infected persons.
- Through blood transfusion, organ transplants and other blood rich products like bone marrow, if the donors are infected. However, in the U.K these products are screened for HIV and therefore are quite safe.
- From an infected mother to her unborn child

It is important to note that HIV can not be transmitted from one person to another through everyday contact with an infected person for example, shaking hands, kissing, using toilet seats, sharing cups, coughing and insect bites.

4. How can you protect yourself against the HIV virus?

The most important means of protection is abstinence from sex and to remain faithful to your partner in marriage and not to have sex before or outside such a relationship. Using condoms is another way of reducing the risk. If used correctly, condoms are up to 99% effective. Pregnant women should have an HIV test and if positive, seek medical advice on ways of reducing the risk of infection between mother and child.

HIV/AIDS AND ISLAM

The aim of this section is to enable readers to get a better understanding of Islamic views on HIV/AIDS. This brochure also considers why it is important that people deal compassionately and sensitively with those who are living with HIV/AIDS.