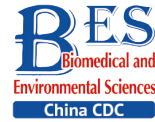


Health Popularization



World AIDS Day: Mobilizing Social Forces to Fight AIDS Together

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AIDS, short for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, is a severe immune system-damaging disease caused by human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. AIDS is widely spread worldwide and has become a serious public health problem.

To raise awareness of AIDS, the World Health Organization designated December 1st as World AIDS Day in 1988. The symbol of World AIDS Day is the red ribbon, which represents the public's concern and support for HIV-infected individuals and AIDS patients. The theme of World AIDS Day 2023 in China is "Mobilizing Social Forces to Fight AIDS Together". The Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC) held a theme promotional event for World AIDS Day 2023 in Beijing. This event further enhanced public awareness of AIDS prevention and control and mobilized social forces to participate in AIDS prevention and control efforts.

China has achieved certain achievements in AIDS prevention and control. Since 2020, there have been zero cases of AIDS infection through blood transfusion in China. In 2022, China's mother-to-child transmission rate of AIDS decreased to 3%. The awareness rate of AIDS prevention and control knowledge among key populations is over 90%. The national coverage and viral suppression rates of AIDS treatment remain at a high level. The rapid increase in AIDS epidemic among young students has been effectively controlled. Next, the China CDC will continue to implement the Healthy China Strategy and the Healthy China Initiative, innovate the mechanism of medical and preventive collaboration and integration, focus on key areas, key populations, and key stages, and develop effective measures such as publicity and education, comprehensive intervention, testing and detection, treatment and

care, and mother-to-child interruption. These measures will effectively reduce and avoid the transmission and spread of AIDS, and continue to keep the AIDS epidemic in China at a low prevalence level. Although there is currently no cure for AIDS, we can control its transmission and reduce impact on patients through proper prevention and treatment.

HIV can be transmitted through various body fluids exchanged with HIV-infected individuals, such as blood, breast milk, semen, and vaginal secretions. The virus can also be transmitted from a pregnant woman to her child during pregnancy and childbirth. Normal daily contact, such as kissing, hugging, shaking hands, or sharing personal items, food, or water, does not lead to infection. HIV destroys the human immune system, making individuals vulnerable to various infections and diseases.

Early screening and diagnosis of AIDS are crucial. In the early stages of HIV infection, the virus replicates rapidly, and patients may experience flu-like symptoms such as fever, fatigue, and sore throat. However, these symptoms are not obvious and can be easily overlooked. Therefore, timely HIV antibody testing is essential if you have engaged in high-risk behaviors or suspect HIV infection. Early diagnosis can help patients understand their condition and receive treatment promptly, preventing the further progression of the disease.

Currently, the main treatment for AIDS is Antiretroviral Therapy (ART), which involves using drugs to suppress HIV replication. ART helps patients maintain a good immune status, delay disease progression, and reduce the risk of transmission to others. ART is often a lifelong treatment, and it is crucial to use medication correctly according to the doctor's advice.

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In addition to medical treatment, the healthy lifestyle and psychological support play an important role in the recovery of patients. Maintaining an adequate diet, balanced nutrition, engaging in regular physical exercise, quitting smoking and limiting alcohol intake, and avoiding excessive fatigue can strengthen individuals' immune system and better

resist infections. At the same time, AIDS patients face significant discrimination and prejudice, which can cause enormous psychological stress. Therefore, AIDS patients need support and understanding from family, friends, and society, as well as access to psychological counseling and consultations to enhance their ability to cope with stress.