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South Africa: Combatting the Rise of HIV in Adolescents
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Background

• South Africa is still recovering from many years of colonial and apartheid rule
• Since the overthrow of Apartheid in 1994, the healthcare system in South Africa has been in a process of constant change, seeking to eliminate inequities in access
• Healthcare system is strained due to lack of adequate funding, and a “brain drain” of qualified medical professionals leaving the country

The Epidemic

• Of the estimated 35 million people living with HIV/AIDS worldwide, approximately 24.7 million (70%) live in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNAIDS Global Report 2015)
• South Africa has the biggest and most high profile HIV epidemic in the world, with an estimated 7 million people living with HIV in 2015
• South Africa has the largest antiretroviral treatment program globally, and is largely domestically financed with more than $1.5 billion annually
• Infection rates of 19.2% for adolescents and adults between the ages of 15-49
• Over past 3 years, new rise in HIV infection rates among Durban youth

Blue Roof Wellness Center

• Blue Roof Wellness Center was once a nightclub infamous in the local community for violence, crime and drug and alcohol abuse
• Global Ambassador Alicia Keys and Keep a Child Alive work to transform the Blue Roof into a state-of-the-art, comprehensive care center for people living with and affected by AIDS and has been operating since 1997
• Services include anti-retroviral treatment, psycho-social support services, prevention, substance abuse programs, nutrition programs, legal advice, youth development programs, and meal services

Education Team on the way to teach about HIV and AIDS

Future directions

• Learned a great deal regarding public health in global setting, including the challenges of creating sustainable efforts in a culture different from my own
• Emphasized and confirmed a desire to remain engaged in Global Health as my career progresses
• Will work to contribute to the Children’s Mercy Global Health track at the conclusion of residency

Correcting the Myths

• My efforts focused on establishing consistent and sustainable educational efforts with three separate schools on a quarterly schedule each year
• We worked to dispel numerous local myths about transmission
• Dispersed stigma about those with HIV
• Educated on importance of proactive screening rather than avoidance of testing

Stopping the Spread

• The HIV Education Program was implemented in all public primary and secondary schools in South Africa in 2000
• Program aims to make youth-friendly, sexual and reproductive health services accessible in school, enrich HIV prevention efforts and support young people who are HIV negative to remain so
• However, the percentage of schools implementing the material has dropped significantly from 60% in 2013 to 20% in 2014
• Factors include shortage of teacher training on sexual health issues and resistance from some schools due to the stigma of the subject matter

Giving presentation on HIV/AIDS to grade 12 at Umbilo Secondary School

Teaching in Umbilo Secondary School

Discussing HIV stigma and myths at Umbilo Secondary School

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