

Coming to Terms with AIDS: 3 Different Perspectives

Interactive Exhibition Offers a Child's View

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Stephen is a 13-year-old boy in Uganda, where 530,000 are infected with HIV and AIDS. He is abducted by rebel soldiers who force him to kill and rape other children. Rescued from the rebels, he waits to find out whether he will die of AIDS.



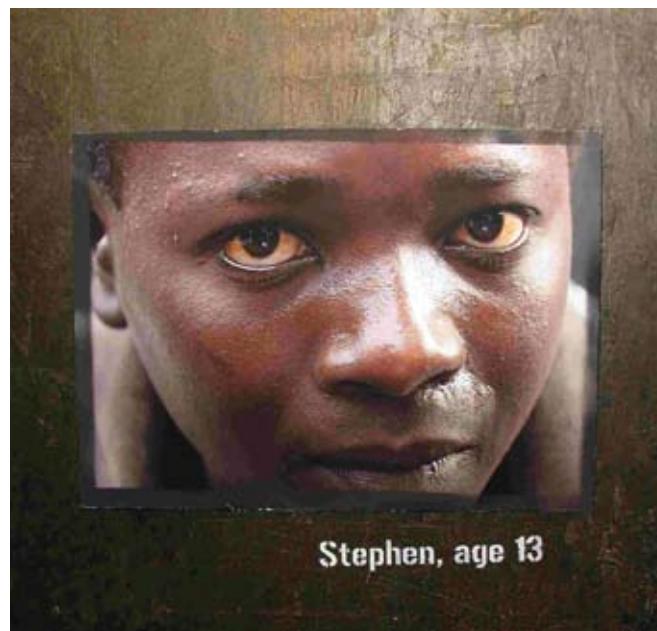
Yen Ling Shek

Thanks to an interactive exhibit, students, staff, faculty and community members can experience Stephen's world and learn his fate. The exhibit will be on display Nov. 26 through Dec. 1 during "AIDS Experience Week" on campus.

The World Vision AIDS Tent Exhibit takes visitors on a haunting journey inside the personal narratives of children affected by AIDS.

"This will be an eye-opening experience for our campus community, as well as the community-at-large, about the AIDS pandemic in Africa," said Yen Ling Shek, coordinator of Cal State Fullerton's Multicultural Leadership Center, one of sponsors of the weeklong event. "We hope that the experience will promote community awareness, encourage volunteerism and strengthen advocacy efforts."

The traveling tent exhibit in the Quad and a resource fair on Titan Walk will be open from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Nov. 26-30 and from 12:30 to 2 p.m. Dec. 1. The fair will feature community organizations and health agencies, free, confidential HIV testing, and a quiet area for reflection.



Stephen, age 13

On Dec. 1, which is World AIDS Day, a 9 a.m.-noon symposium will be held in the Titan Student Union. It will include guest speakers and a faculty panel discussion, featuring Anthony DiStefano, assistant professor of health science, and Davina Ling, assistant professor of economics.

Cal State Fullerton, NewSong Community Church of North Orange County, World Vision and a number of student organizations are sponsoring the event. *inside*

Stats at a Glance

- 40 million people worldwide are living with HIV.
- 25 million people have died as a result of AIDS since the disease was identified.
- 15 million children worldwide have lost one or both parents as a result of AIDS.
- More than 3 million people die as a result of AIDS each year.

Sources: UNAIDS and World Vision.

Addressing Intervention Strategy for Service Providers

BY MIMI KO CRUZ mkocruz@fullerton.edu

Learning that you or a partner has AIDS or HIV sometimes triggers suicidal tendencies or other violent reactions. And, Anthony DiStefano, assistant professor of health science, wants to know how to best intervene.

With an increasing number of studies showing a connection between violence and people with the incurable disease, intervention could help stem the growing trend. That is the focus of DiStefano's current research and the topic he will discuss at the Dec. 1 AIDS symposium on campus.

Through his research, DiStefano discovered that it is when people are first told they are HIV positive that they are at higher risk of becoming suicidal. When they disclose their disease to their partners and others, they are at a higher risk of becoming the victims of violence, depending on how people react to the news.

"Knowing that these types of connections exist," DiStefano said, "I want to discover what medical and social service providers are doing to address these issues."

He is finding out by interviewing providers throughout the San Francisco area.

"From preliminary data, it doesn't look like there are specific protocols for medical or social service providers," DiStefano said, adding that he plans to expand his interviews with a larger survey to include more areas in California.

"There's a gap in our knowledge as far as intervention efforts and it's important to link our research to the providers because they are in contact with the people at risk," he said. "They need this information to figure out ways to intervene and help. I'm hoping the providers get training on assessment so they can plan appropriate actions for those in need."



Anthony DiStefano

DiStefano joined the CSUF faculty this fall. He holds a doctorate in public health from UCLA. His training, graduate studies and research focused on violence among sexual minorities (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and those with ambiguous or male and female sex organs). His doctoral dissertation was an ethnographic study of violence involving sexual minorities in Japan. He was a postdoctoral fellow at the Center for AIDS Prevention Studies at UC San Francisco, where he was trained as an HIV researcher. ■

Economist Discusses AIDS



Davina C. Ling

Davina C. Ling, assistant professor and director of the Center for Study of Economics of Aging and Health, will be one of the panelists at the Dec. 1 Aids symposium on campus. She has published numerous papers on her HIV/AIDS-related studies. Some of the topics she has researched in the past year include the environmental health and safety of Chinese sex workers and the psychological health and suicidal tendencies among female street sex workers. "A lot of my publications have to do with health behaviors and intervention among those who are most at-risk for AIDS," Ling said, adding that she lectures on the topic often and includes it in her economics of health course. ■

Definitions

HIV Human Immunodeficiency Virus. The virus, which usually leads to AIDS, can weaken the immune system, making it difficult to fight off certain infections.

AIDS Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. The disease of the immune system is characterized by increased susceptibility to infections, certain cancers and neurological disorders. Transmitted through the body's bloodstream by sexual contact or contaminated hypodermic needles, it destroys the body's natural protection from infection and usually causes death.