Introduction

More than 40 million people worldwide have been infected with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) since it was first reported in 1981.

With 1.2 million people dying every year, over 25 million have so far lost their lives to the disease (Iqbal, 2010).

Two thirds of those infected, with HIV live in Sub-Saharan Africa, where infection rates continue to increase (Buti et al. (2006)).

In 2007, 35% of all HIV infections occurred in Africa, which is the home of over 67% of all people living with AIDS worldwide (Iqbal, 2010).

AIDS has orphaned over 13 million children with many of them losing one or both parents in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The disease has had effects on almost every economy in Africa in particular in many other parts of the world (Pope, 2009).

Most of the studies related to HIV/AIDS have been conducted in stable populations across the globe and very few have been devoted to displaced populations, particularly those in areas of conflict.

A comprehensive review of published work between 1990 and 2010 on determinants of HIV/AIDS in areas of conflict was conducted.

Factors influencing HIV/AIDS in conflict areas include forced population displacement, breakdown of traditional sexual norms, lack of health infrastructure, and poverty and powerlessness of women and children.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to address a number of different social determinants of HIV/AIDS in displaced populations in areas of conflict.

Methodology

The review research employed an open search of PUBMED database of articles published in English language between 1990 and 2010.

Keywords such as “HIV and war”, “HIV/AIDS and conflict”, AIDS in displaced populations, “AIDS and security” were used.

Out of the 453 hits recorded in this search, only 12 papers dealt with the subject. A summary of the results of the review is presented in Table 1.

Results

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Discussion

Many countries around the world are experiencing active conflicts, which have led to the removal and displacement of large populations who end up as refugees or internally displaced people.

Population displacement comes with challenges among them the spread of HIV/AIDS as many social determinants such as scarcity of food, shelter, health services, insecurity of the displaced and gender power differentials make them destitute therefore resorting to risky survival behaviors.

HIV/AIDS is not just a health issue but also a pandemic of global importance, especially since it affects human rights and development along with social and gender relations.

It disrupts families when combined with conflict and has left many orphans whose suffering in many cases runs across generations.

Social determinants of increased HIV/AIDS prevalence in displaced populations are scarcity of food, poverty, insecurity of displaced populations and gender power differentials.

HIV/AIDS has become a global security threat that must be confronted by all nations rich and poor alike.

In the war against HIV/AIDS, there is no us and them, and developing and developed countries, no rich or poor, only a common enemy that knows no frontiers and threatens all humanity (UNGASS, 2001).

References


