

HIV/AIDS at 30: Back to the Future
BHIVA / Wellcome Trust Multidisciplinary Event to mark World AIDS Day 2011

British HIV Association **BHIVA** Supported by **wellcome**trust

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1500–2045
Thursday 1 December 2011
Wellcome Collection Conference Centre
London

In support of World AIDS Day

In partnership with CHIRP, HIV, DHIVA

British HIV Association (BHIVA) 2011

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Professor Claudia Stein
University of Warwick

Thursday 1 December 2011, Wellcome Collection Conference Centre, London

HIV/AIDS at 30: Back to the Future

The History of HIV/AIDS: A Passionate Driving Force for the Future

Dr Claudia Stein
Director, Centre for the History of Medicine
University of Warwick

MEDICAL AND SCIENTIFIC CONSULTANT:
JOSEPH SONNABEND, M.D.
Chairman, Scientific Committee,
AIDS MEDICAL FOUNDATION



**How to Have Sex
in an Epidemic:
One Approach**

WHAT CAUSES AIDS?

There are two general theories under serious discussion at the moment, the "new" agent theory and the multifactorial theory.

The New Agent Theory: Some researchers believe that the cause of AIDS is a new AIDS agent, presumably a virus, which attacks the immune system and which is the common link between all of the groups at risk (haemophiliacs, IV drug abusers, haemophiliacs and infants of high risk parents who are also victims of breast-feeding). This theory proposes that this putative new killer virus has been introduced into the gay male community and is being spread by sexual contact. Some propose that even a single exposure to this virus will produce AIDS after a long incubation period.

The Multifactorial Theory: Other researchers believe that a number of different factors must occur in order for AIDS to develop. Rather than occurring after a single exposure, this theory suggests that the syndrome "builds up" over a period of continual exposure to agents containing large amounts of cytomegalovirus (CMV). CMV (which is discussed in brief beginning at page 100) is a common virus and has long been recognized as a cause of disease in many different settings. It can also be derived by people who are in apparent good health.

What is the evidence for the "New" Virus Theory? The argument in favor of the new AIDS theory rests on the appearance of a distinct syndrome occurring in each of the risk groups listed above. Hypothetically, a disease resulting from a single agent transmitted by

sexual contact, by intravenous drug abuse, by blood transfusion, by breast-feeding, or by contact with infected body fluids, should occur in all of the groups at risk. The fact that the syndrome does not occur in all of these groups is evidence against the "new" virus theory.

The multifactorial theory, on the other hand, does not require that the disease occur in all of the groups at risk. It only requires that the disease occur in all of the groups at risk who are exposed to the multifactorial agent. This theory is supported by the fact that the disease does not occur in all of the groups at risk who are not exposed to the multifactorial agent.

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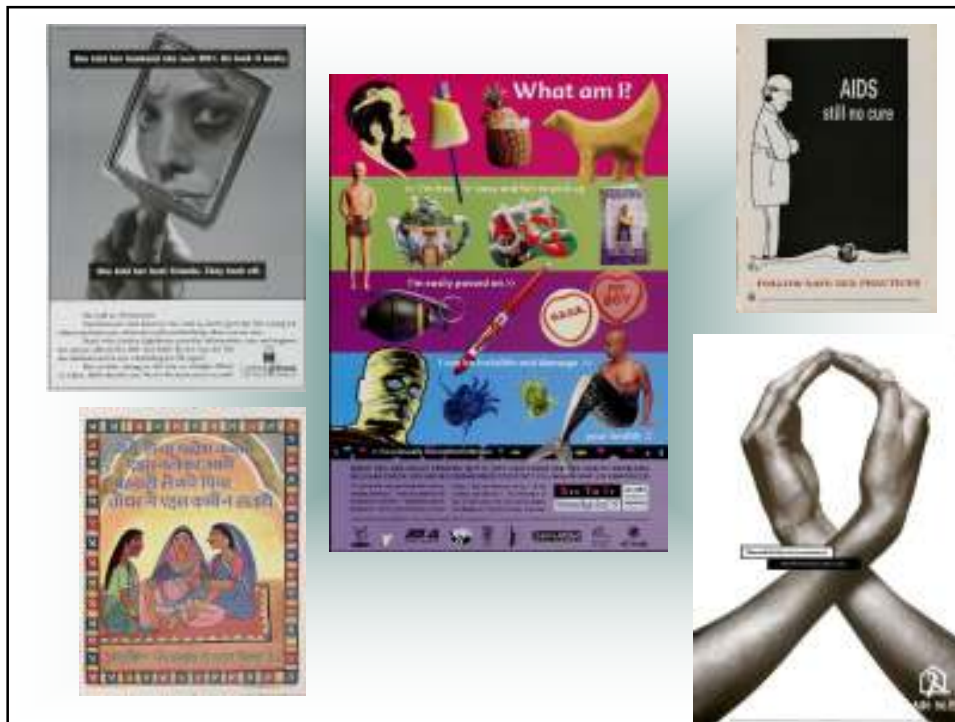
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What's over isn't sex -
just sex without responsibility





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