HIV and Circumcision

HIV is different from most other viruses because it attacks the immune system. The immune system gives our bodies the ability to fight infections. HIV finds and destroys a type of white blood cell (T cells or CD4 cells) that the immune system must have to fight disease[1].

In 1984 the HIV virus was found. A vaccine has yet to be produced.

The CDC has been underestimating the number of HIV infections in the U. S. by about 40% annually for the past ten years. African-Americans were seven times as likely to have contracted a new infection as whites, and Latinos were three times as likely. The catastrophe of HIV/AIDS in the developing world is even more horrifying.

PREVENTION - Safe-sex education and condom distribution programs can help. Strong epidermiological evidence suggests that circumcision can reduce the risk of transmitting HIV as much as 60%[2]. (See www.who.int/hiv/topics/malecircumcision/en/.) It is recommended that male infants be circumcised, so that, when sexually active, their risk of contracting and transmitting HIV will be greatly reduced.

Current drug regimens can dramatically suppress HIV in patients, but none of these agents can completely eliminate the virus.

Statistics from the World Health Organization:

Percentage of Population with HIV

U. S.	0.5 - 1%
Sub- Sahara Africa	6%
Middle East	< 0.1%
Israel	0.1 - 0.5%

Global annual rate of death due to HIV = 2%

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(1) Centers for Disease Control
(2) Scientific American - October 2008

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