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Issues - AIDS - Containment

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Issues -

ADS —
containment

Copy for Sandy Thurman

AIDS Containment

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9/05/98

The Health Department's "Healthy Date ID Card"

The world's AIDS epidemic has recently been determined to be growing at the frightening rate of 20 percent per year. Even in the United States there are more Americans who become fatally infected with this deadly virus each year, than who are killed in all the traffic accidents across the nation.

About fifteen years ago, Congress chose to pursue a chemical solution to the AIDS epidemic nightmare. This has turned out to be a much more difficult task than was anticipated. Cuba on the other hand, with its free sanitariums, has had phenomenal success using this gentle form of quarantine, of Cubans who are HIV infected. As an interim stopgap measure, Congress should consider implementing a program that I would describe as a subtle form of reverse quarantine, that is voluntary, convenient and anonymous and will work well in our democracy.

Most people sexually contract AIDS, by unknowingly having sex with someone who is already infected. If there was a way that a potential victim would become suspicious, of the health of a prospective partner who was HIV infected, then this lethal sexual encounter could be happily avoided. The Health Department's "Healthy Date ID card" is designed to do exactly this. And if it were to become as popular among young single Americans, as say Nike sneakers, then anyone who seeks physical intimacy without a valid "Healthy Date ID Card", will indeed arouse the suspicion of their prospective partner. Why just the popularity alone of these cards, will create a powerful deterrent against all HIV infected people who knowingly try to infect their healthy partners.

State Health Departments across the nation, have been routinely testing millions of Americans for HIV. I propose that a federally sponsored "Healthy Date Program" be established, so that anyone being tested for HIV by their local health department, can request this program instead of the regular HIV test procedure.

Each person applying at their local Health Department, for the "Healthy Date Program" must be at least 16 years of age. To maintain privacy, last names or addresses are not used, but some form of existing ID, with this information taped over, must be briefly shown. A voiceprint of the applicant saying his first and middle name and an x-ray handprint is also taken. After the applicant has their blood drawn for HIV testing, they are issued a "Healthy Date ID card" which contains:

- 1/ origin of card "The United States Dept of HHS"
- 2/ the card name "Healthy Date ID Card"
- 3/ the cardholders first and middle name
- 4/ a photo of the cardholder
- 5/ his card number, 32935-7829
- 6/ a statement that says "Please call the datecheck hotline
for present health status.
1-800-222-3344"

A person can use his " Healthy Date ID Card " anytime a new friend shows up in his life, to show that he is healthy. This is done by both of them placing a joint call to the toll-free datecheck hotline which connects them into a nation-wide Health Department computer network. When a polite computer voice answers, the cardholder enters his card number and secret password using the telephone keypad and then says his first and middle name. The friend then does the same, except that if he has no card, he can substitute all zeros for the card number. The computer voice then informs the new friend that the cardholder has been tested and is declared healthy. The new friend can now relax and enjoy their new friendship. If both parties happen to have a " Healthy Date ID card " then so much the better. The datecheck hotline, in addition to single mode operation, has a "couple" mode to accomodate these two cardholders with one phone call.

In order for the nation-wide computer network to maintain up to date files on everyone's health, a system is implemented whereby all cardholders must periodically mail in a blotter that contains a small sample of their blood. How often they do this, depends on how socially active they are. First, a cardholder's "single mode" capability is temporarily disabled, at exactly 4 months since their last sample, for a male, or 8 months for a female. Then on their next datecheck hotline inquiry, which is in the "couple" mode, the computer treats them as one entity and adds together both partner's aforementioned gender based time limits, and both of their elapsed times since their last sample. If the combined elapsed time exceeds the combined time limit then both cardholders are requested to mail in a fresh sample using a double size " buddy test mailer " that also contains their two witnessing signatures.

If cardholders fail to mail in a requested " buddy test mailer " within ten days, they are automatically placed on a status, called temporary isolation. This is communicated to their friends, every time a datecheck hotline inquiry is made.

At the blood testing lab, both blood samples of the mailer are mixed together and processed as one sample, so as to reduce costs. If the sample test results are HIV positive then both parties are temporarily suspended and all of their prior partners for the last 6 months are listed in the computer network as being on temporary isolation. This isolation or suspended status can only be removed by submitting to an HIV blood test and sometimes a T4 cell count, administered at the local health department after an appropriate waiting period.

Venereal Disease can play a critical role in assisting the AIDS virus in penetrating it's victim's skin. So this enemy must be attacked as well. The anatomy of a male is far better suited than the female, for detecting most VD. It would therefore be a good strategy to declare that men are to be entirely blamed for the spread of VD, and that women are merely the victims. Men could then accept primary responsibility for curtailing these diseases.

There are now low cost urine test strips available, that detect urinary tract infections in men. Included with each "buddy test mailer" sold, perhaps in convenience stores for two dollars, could be a test strip that a male would use as an instant check for Gonorrhea or Chlamydia.

A woman infected with one of these diseases, can infect numerous men before she shows any symptoms. So if men would just come forward more often, and acknowledge to each of their recent sex partners that they had become infected with VD, they could significantly reduce the spread of their disease.

What is needed to facilitate them in doing this is to eliminate all of the unpleasant aspects of this communication chore, while giving them a personal incentive to want to do this. Fortunately, the nation-wide computer network is well suited for this job, because it remembers all "couple" mode, two cardholder inquires for the last 6 months.

A cardholder who is being treated for VD, can request from his physician, a special code number that he can enter, after he calls the datecheck hotline and enters his card number and secret password. This special code automatically triggers an anonymous STD Health Alert which is transmitted to the file voice-mail of each of his last six partners, and their most recent partners. If there aren't yet a dozen people, it will select the remaining number from a stranger pool created by the eleven people that were ahead of him in the Health Department's application line.

When a man triggers this anonymous STD Health Alert, the most recent partner, of his most recent partner, is declared to be sitting in the "hot seat" and is arbitrarily punished by being placed on temporary isolation for two months, while he, as triggerman is rewarded with a six month immunity to any "hot seat" punitive measure that someone else might be attempting to inflict on him.

If the same woman were to infect several men, this structure creates a strong incentive to being the very first man to trigger the alert. When a woman triggers an alert, it is her most recent male partner who is in the "hot seat". Women are never in the "hot seat". If a man chooses not to trigger an alert, he must "sweat it out" for two months, hoping she won't infect anyone else.

The purpose of the Health Department's "Healthy Date ID Card" is to protect all cardholders from getting AIDS. Determined individuals can, by becoming socially overactive, diminish the card's effectiveness. To discourage this from happening, any cardholder's computer file automatically becomes restricted for 30 days if it is accessed by the datecheck hotline more than a dozen times in any 60 day period.

Limited access to this 30 day restricted file is still possible if they choose, first to submit to both an HIV blood test and a VD checkup administered by their local health department, and then rent for ten dollars, a small sonic decryption key used to unlock their file each time they access it during the 30 days. If after 30 days, they become restricted again, then they simply repeat the procedure. Since they are recently tested, their "couple" mode partners are permitted to mail in, when requested, a "buddy test mailer" without a buddy.

An applicant for a "healthy Date ID Card" can start using his new card as soon as his initial HIV test results indicate that he is healthy. Only at this point, is his application file transferred from a working floppy disc, into the Health Department's computer network. Applicants who do not pass the HIV test, never have their files copied from the working floppy disc, and therefore remain anonymous, as each working floppy disc is completely erased every month. They are free to continue to use their Health Department card as a form of identification. If any cardholder were to subsequently become infected with HIV, his computer file would be completely erased from the Health Department's computer network.

At the time of enrollment, each applicant is offered an optional take home postcard that he would only fill in, with some mailing address and the name "occupant", if he wanted notification by mail in the event that he, or any of his recent partners, has a change in their health status, or if he has been included in an STD Health Alert. This address would be stored off-line in a central address vault. A notification by mail, only tells him that he has some voice-mail in his computer file which he can access by himself, by calling the datecheck hotline and entering his card number and secret password, then pushing the * button on his telephone.

In order to discourage a cardholder from attempting to lend his computer file to someone else, All applicant photos are taken with a digital camera which creates an electronic video file. All of these files are stored in a central photo archive. Any cardholder, can call the datecheck hotline anytime, enter his card number and his secret password, and with the push of the # button, have mailed to him, a small laser printer generated photo on plain paper, of the last partner with whom he jointly conducted a "couple" mode datecheck hotline inquiry.

There is also a feature of the computer system called "echo check" that any cardholder can request during a "couple" mode inquiry, that uses the file voiceprint of his friend to confirm his identity. It does this by replaying, in an endless loop, a friend's spoken voice of his name, quickly followed by his file voiceprint.

For security reasons, all cardholders with a restricted computer file have an "echo check" of their voice silently recorded every time their file is accessed. These recordings are for surveillance and are stored for later evaluation.

To deter foul play, the very last friend of any cardholder, who conducts a datecheck hotline inquiry with them, whether a cardholder or not, has their voice recorded, and preserved as a voiceprint, until it is overwritten by a later datecheck hotline inquiry.

To inform the public about the Health Department's new " Healthy Date ID Card " there could be a promotional campaign that consists of the following:

- 1/ TV and radio advertising whose theme could be "Remember to just say no thanks" unless he has a Health Department's " Healthy Date ID Card ".
- 2/ The Virus Stoppers million dollar weekly jackpot lottery that is televised nation-wide and can also be heard on national radio. It is free, but only cardholders who have been tested with a partner, in the last 6 months are enrolled in the lottery. This is done automatically. Winners who turn out to be married, or who are over 62 years of age, are not eligible, and must forfeit their prize.

- 3/ Lucky Stallion red/black roulette gaming machines that are installed on the walls of Men's restrooms in nightclubs, Gay bars and truckstops. Only a person with a " Healthy Date ID Card " can play. No money is involved. A person plays by swiping his card through a card reader. When he selects red or black, the machine begins to click like a roulette wheel. Then the clicking slows down. When it stops, either a winning chime is sounded or a losing buzzer. If it's a winning chime, then a free condom is dispensed. An internal memory limits each player to only one play every 40 hours. There is a 60 second LED light countdown before the machine is ready to play again. On the side of the machine is a statement that reads
" Warning - If you get Genital Herpes, it can make you itch night and day forever"
- 4/ Mobile recruitment vans that issue on the spot, " Healthy Date ID cards " and administer applicant HIV tests using the cotton mouth swab technique instead of a blood test. These vans would visit high schools and colleges during the day and at night they would park in the parking lots of various nightclubs and Gay bars. On weekends they could circulate around the major malls. Sometimes they would visit public housing projects. Late at night they could visit a city's red light district or certain highway truck stops where the ladies of the night tend to congregate.

Every hospital in the United States could be directly connected to the Health Department's nation-wide computer network, and be permitted to have a special passive supervisory video terminal, equipped with a single passkey to restrict access, that is capable of reading and decrypting the magnetic strip of a " Healthy Date ID Card " and then retrieving from his file, a cardholder's present health status. The cardholder, now a patient at the hospital, gives them permission to obtain his present HIV health status, by physically handing over his card to them for swiping. A present health status called "no file" means that the patient is probably HIV infected. For the Emergency Room environment where the card may not have been brought to the hospital, all that is needed is the patient's first and middle name and their card number, which is a concatenation of their zip code and the last 4 digits of their Social Security number. Because the supervisory video terminal is capable of overriding the 7 digit secret password, it can conduct a file search and quickly retrieve the present health status from the patient's file, if he is healthy, anytime throughout his life.

The approximate mathematical model of the " Healthy Date ID Card " when used by most of the people in an idealized closed society, reveals that any internal HIV flare-up would have more difficulty in sustaining itself, than a candle would have in staying lit in a rainstorm.

Because there is no cure for AIDS, the number of Americans who are fatally infected with this virus is mounting, and now exceeds the total number of Americans killed in WWI, WWII, Korea and Vietnam.

It is time for Congress to consider stronger action. This program will cost the Government about 40,000 dollars for each person saved from contracting AIDS. While this is a substantial sum, I predict that, for every million dollars the Government spends on this program, they will save between two and three million dollars down the road, in reduced healthcare costs for people suffering from AIDS.

For the Health Department, the " Healthy Date ID Card " is nothing more than an improved communication apparatus, that now allows the healthy public to share their favorable test results with each other, so that they can avoid close personal contact with infected people, who could sentence them to an early death. At the same time, this apparatus maintains total anonymity for all those unfortunate people who are fatally infected.

For the world's oldest profession, the " Healthy Date ID Card " is an opportunity for half of them to improve their business by driving away their unhealthy competition and also reducing their own health risk.

The resistance that some people have to being HIV tested, because they "just as soon not know" will change to "sure, if it helps my social life".

For the average single male who spends every weekend searching for a mate, he will be delighted in having a " Healthy Date ID Card " because it will add to him looking good, which is very important to him.

For those many single, socially cautious women who may be overly fearful that their next kiss may be delivered by someone who turns out to be their executioner, the safe sanctuary that the " Healthy Date ID Card " can provide, will literally change their lives.

For the tens of thousands of young Americans, whose lives will be saved annually, they may never know that they were on a tragic collision course with the Grim Reaper, before their compassionate Government intervened, and forever altered their destiny.

After years of fighting a losing battle against AIDS, it now becomes possible for this country to construct a new powerful weapon, for its citizens to use, that can put this deadly virus enemy in full retreat.

Yours truly,


Jeremiah Murphy

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Copy for Sandra Thurman

AIDS Containment
Frell

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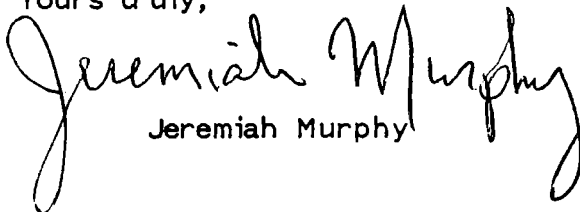
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Yours truly,


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