

**AIDS ACTION NOW. Information, Prevention and Support in Zimbabwe**, Helen Jackson, AIDS Counselling Trust (ACT), Harare, 1988 (153pp, Z\$5 internal, US\$5 external).

HIV infection and AIDS are a problem in Zimbabwe and, as such, information is needed on how to tackle this problem. This book sets out to give information on HIV and AIDS, and what action to take, with simple illustrations, and it clearly meets its objectives.

Before detailing the contents of the book a quick overview will reveal that it can be read on three different levels. Firstly, all the detailed, but lucidly written, text can be read. Secondly, in each chapter both quotations and key points are boxed as highlights, thus enabling the reader to skip or re-refer to chapters without having to search the text for important points. Thirdly, the reader can gain important information from the cartoons alone. Each cartoon contains a simple but very relevant message, which helps to clarify some of the common misconceptions about HIV infection and AIDS.

The book is divided into 7 chapters. The first chapter gives background information on the AIDS epidemic, the controversy over its origin and on HIV infection. Although statistics are rapidly changing a good baseline is given and readers can update their information from other sources. Chapters 2 to 5 give information on HIV infection, and the AIDS disease, transmission of the AIDS virus (HIV), avoiding HIV infection and testing for the AIDS virus (HIV). These chapters, which can be read in sequence or individually, give important facts as well as correct misconceptions. This makes it useful for a wide variety of people, not only health workers. Points for group discussion can also be easily selected.

Chapter 6 gives very useful information on counselling, support and self-help, that can be used equally well by the person suffering from AIDS or with non-symptomatic HIV infection, friends, relatives as well as the counsellor or educator. With the rapid spread of the HIV virus and lack of trained counsellors, this chapter will be invaluable to all who read it. The final chapter is devoted to public awareness, attitudes and policy. Although awareness of AIDS is growing amongst the public, attitudes towards sufferers and toward changing behaviour are only changing very slowly. The need for increased awareness cannot be over-emphasised and thus the readers of this book will be in a better position to educate others.

The Appendices with contact addresses, an annotated Bibliography and Glossary of Terms are unusually helpful, and in themselves make the book worthwhile. This book should be widely available to the public in libraries, schools and clinics, as well as to private individuals. It gives good basic information on HIV and AIDS and guidance on solving this growing problem.

Reviewed by E Mason, Ministry of Health, Harare, Zimbabwe.