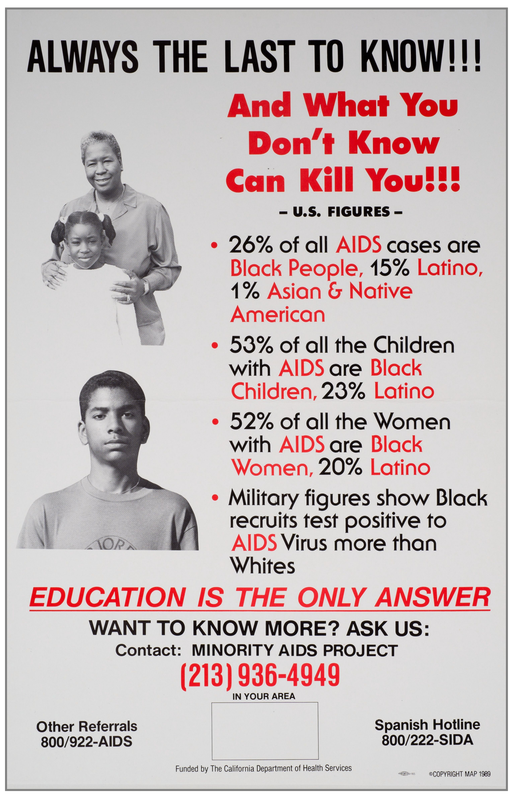
Still Dyin'

AIDS in the Black Community

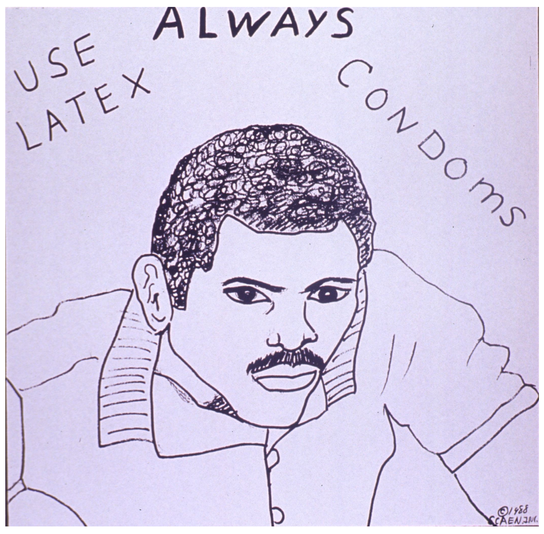
White Man's Disease

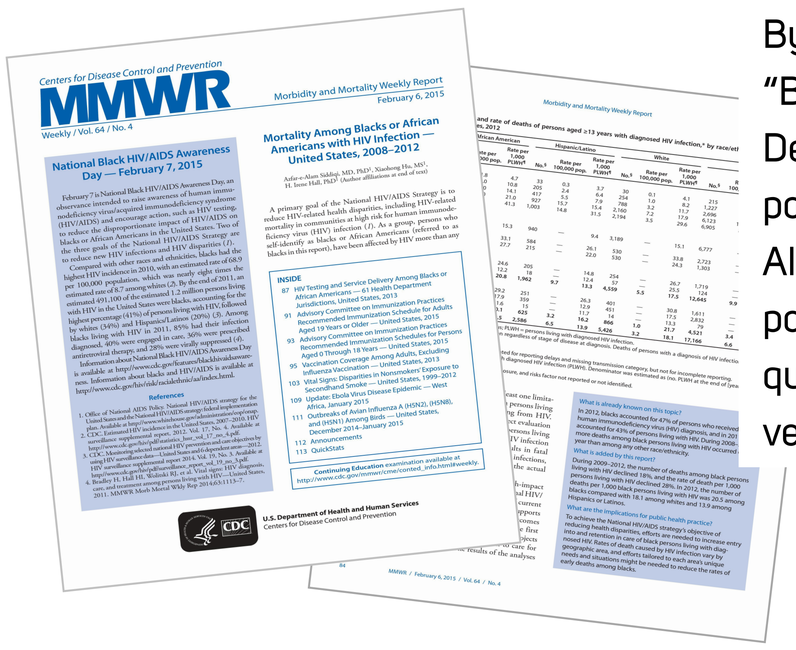
AIDS in the United States was almost instantly framed as a gay disease—newspapers spoke of "gay cancer" while researchers discussed GRID, "gay-related immunodeficiency." This early characterization of AIDS as a gay, white disease, blinded policy makers, community organizers, and even medical researchers, to the fact that "Blacks bore a disproportionate population burden of HIV/AIDS cases." The "public face of the disease" was one of "white gay men" and this notion, combined with racial injustice, poverty, and concomitant higher rate of intravenous (IV) drug use, plus cultural differences towards homosexuality, resulted in an "epidemic [that] was raging in America's Black communities" that was "invisible to the majority of Americans."



> *"When AIDS hit our community, we had so many other problems—racism, socioeconomic issues, with an overlay of homophobia—it was easy to say, That's a white disease, not our problem. Than began a conspiracy of silence around the disease.*
>
> *Phill Wilson, African American AIDS Policy & Training Institute. "Speaking Out to Make AIDS an Issue of Color." New York Times 19 Dec. 2000*

All posters are courtesy of the National Library of Medicine. The Minority AIDS Project, 1986-1989 and the South Carolina AIDS Education Network, 1988.

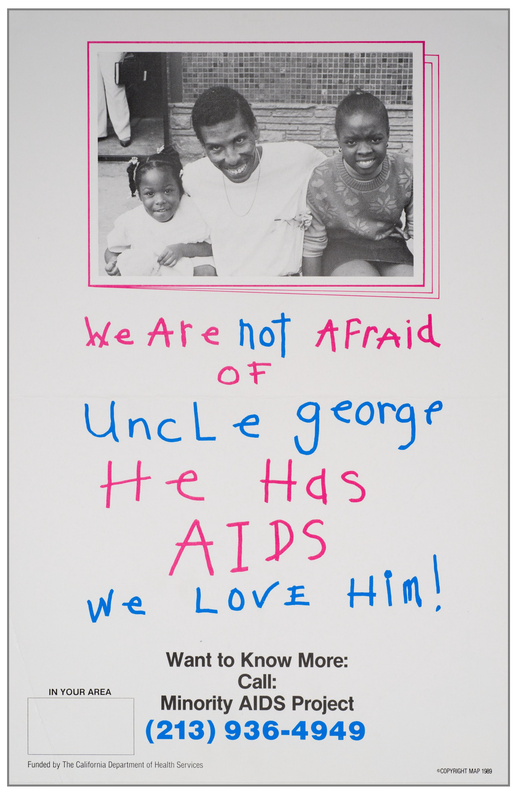



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
MMWR
Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report
Weekly / Vol. 64 / No. 4
February 6, 2015
National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day — February 7, 2015
Mortality Among Blacks or African Americans with HIV Infection — United States, 2008–2012
INSIDE
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

By 1985 the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) revealed that "Blacks comprise 25 percent of all victims of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome—more than double the 12 percent Black population... And some 56 percent of the nation's children hit by AIDS are Black." Not only were there disproportionately more HIV positive African Americans, but they were dying significantly more quickly—living just six to eight months after an AIDS diagnosis versus the median period of 18 months.

The racial disparity in HIV/AIDS rates continues today. In 2020, Black Americans were 7.8 times more likely than white Americans to be diagnosed with HIV and accounted for 42.1 percent of HIV infection cases in the United States in 2019. The gender differential is staggering—African American women have 15 times the AIDS rate as white women and are 15.3 times as likely to die from HIV infection.

> *"Black gay men are still dyin'. Still dyin'. And I'm pissed off at the fact that America has overlooked us. When they went on the HIV and AIDS campaign and took it national they took it with women; Women and HIV. And then they blamed us you know. They blamed us for it. It was gay men's fault. It was men on the down low. It was because of them that women are getting HIV. "*
>
> *Davon, a Black gay man quoted in Mackenzie, Sonja. Structural Intimacies: Sexual Stories in the Black AIDS Epidemic. Rutgers University Press, 2013*





> *"I listen to the beat of my heart,*
> *let this primal pulse lead me,*
> *though lately I've lived with another rhythm.*
> *At first, I thought just time passing. But I discovered a time bomb ticking in my blood.*
> *Faces, friends disappear."*
>
> *Marlon Riggs, Tongues Untied (1989 documentary)*

> *"Let's be clear, when you hear about women and AIDS or babies with AIDS or now even men who sleep with men who have AIDS, whether it's stated or not, those are overwhelmingly black women, black babies and black men."*
>
> *Phill Wilson, African American AIDS Policy & Training Institute. "Speaking Out to Make AIDS an Issue of Color."*