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|  | **Poverty**Poverty is an overarching factor that increases vulnerability to HIV. It can push girls into relationships with older men for the promise of money or gifts. Poverty fuels the HIV epidemic due to its impact on all aspects of life, including income, housing, education, [nutrition](http://www.thebody.com/content/art6083.html?ic=4001), access to health care -- and the list goes on. In [...] communities where poverty rates are even higher, there exists a greater gap in all of these areas that fuels the inability to negotiate, feel empowered, get educated on HIV and get tested.

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**TASK: Explain in what way “poverty” is a factor for HIV transmission.**Sources: [http://www.thebody.com/content/65639/what-really-fuels-the-hivaids-epidemic-in-black-](http://www.thebody.com/content/65639/what-really-fuels-the-hivaids-epidemic-in-black-am.html) am.html ; http://www.avert.org/professionals/social-issues/gender-inequality

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|  | **Gender Inequality**Worldwide, women constitute more than half of all people living with HIV. Young women and adolescent girls account for one in every five new HIV infections in Africa and are nearly three times as likely as men of the same age group to be living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa. In South Africa 34% of sexually active adolescent girls report being in a relationship with a man at least five years older than them. This is more likely to expose young women to unsafe sexual behaviours, low condom use and an increased risk of sexually transmitted infections. The risk of trafficking and sexual exploitation is also higher for young women and adolescent girls living in poverty. Despite the availability of antiretroviral treatment (ART), AIDS-related illnesses remain the leading cause of death among African women of reproductive age. These inequalities are more severe for marginalised women, including female sex workers, transgender women, migrant women and women with disabilities who are also at a heightened risk of discrimination and violence.**TASK: Explain in what way “gender inequality” is a factor for HIV transmission.**Source: http://www.avert.org/professionals/social-issues/gender-inequality**Injection Drug Use**Injection drug use (IDU) can be a direct route of HIV transmission if people share needles, syringes, or other injection materials that are contaminated with HIV. However, drinking alcohol and ingesting, smoking, or inhaling drugs are also associated with increased risk for HIV. These substances alter judgment, which can lead to risky sexual behaviors (e.g., having sex without a condom, having multiple partners) that can make people more likely to get and transmit HIV.**TASK: Explain in what way the “injection drug use” is a factor for HIV transmission.**Source: https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/risk/substanceuse.html  |

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|  | **Homophobia**The global HIV and AIDS epidemic has always been closely linked with negative attitudes towards lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, especially men who have sex with men (MSM); a group that is particularly affected by HIV and AIDS. In many countries, stigma and discrimination prevent LGBT people from accessing vital HIV prevention, testing, and treatment and care services. This means that many people are unknowingly living with HIV, or being diagnosed late when HIV is harder to treat. Headlines such as, “Alert over ‘gay plague’”, and “‘Gay plague’ may lead to blood ban on homosexuals, the LGBT community. |

 **TASK: Explain in what way “homophobia” is a factor for HIV transmission.**

 Sources: <http://www.thebody.com/content/65639/what-really-fuels-the-hivaids-epidemic-in-black->

 am.html ; http://www.avert.org/professionals/hiv-social-issues/homophobia

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|  | **Untreated and Undiagnosed STDs**Undiagnosed and untreated sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are known to increase the chances of one being infected with HIV because they suppress your immune system, making you more vulnerable to seroconverting. It's also important to note that many STDs have no signs or symptoms, especially among men, and with symptoms or not, the disease can be passed on to a sex partner. If you have ever had an STD, you may have been exposed to HIV as well, and should consider getting tested for HIV. Furthermore, if you currently have an STD, you need to see a medical provider as soon as possible. Having an STD causes the skin to break down and can increase the risk of getting HIV, or passing HIV to others if an HIV-infected person has an STD. |

 **TASK: Explain in what way “untreated and undiagnosed STDs” are a factor for HIV**

 **transmission.**

 Sources:

[http://www.thebody.com/content/65639/what-really-fuels-the-hivaids-epidemic-in-black-](http://www.thebody.com/content/65639/what-really-fuels-the-hivaids-epidemic-in-black-%20%20%20%20am.html)

 [am.html](http://www.thebody.com/content/65639/what-really-fuels-the-hivaids-epidemic-in-black-%20%20%20%20am.html); http://hivinsite.ucsf.edu/hiv?page=basics-00-15

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|  | **Lack of Comprehensive Sex Education**Unprotected sex is the most common cause of HIV among young people, with sharing infected needles second. Adolescence is often associated with experimentation of risky sexual and drug-related behaviours, increasing a young person's vulnerability to HIV. For some, this is a result of not having the correct knowledge about HIV and how to prevent it, highlighting the need for HIV and sexual and reproductive health education. For others, it is the result of being forced to have unprotected sex, or to inject drugs. |

**TASK: Explain in what way the “lack of comprehensive sex education” is a factor for HIV transmission.**

Source: http://www.avert.org/professionals/hiv-social-issues/key-affected-populations/young-people