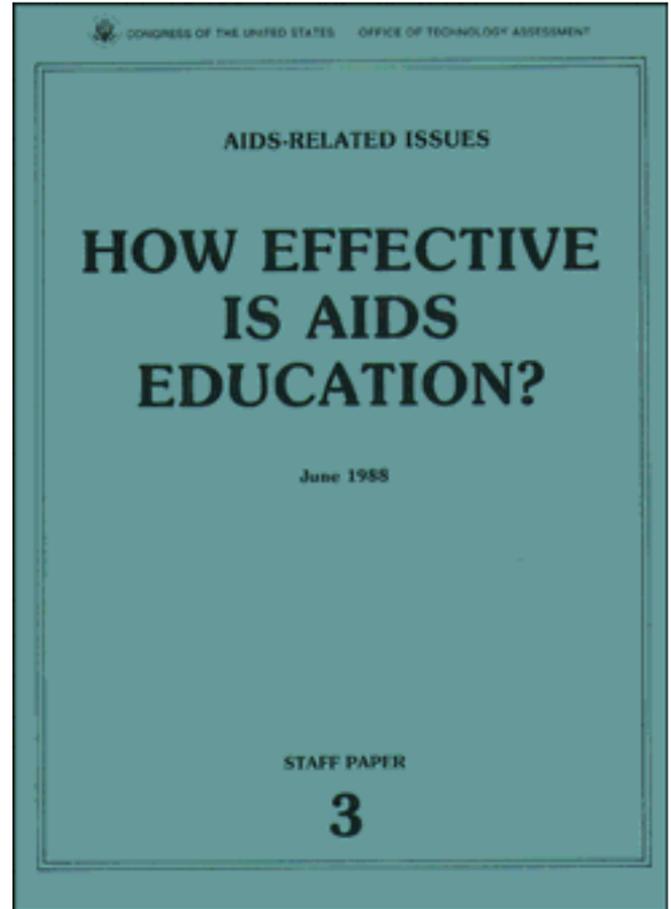


How Effective Is AIDS Education?

June 1988

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PREFACE

The impact of AIDS on the Nation's health and health care resources continues unabated. Congress has responded to the AIDS crisis with large increases in Federal funds for basic and applied research and education, and has begun to grapple with the difficult issues involved in financing AIDS-related health care. AIDS is also appearing on the agenda of an increasing number of congressional committees and raises numerous important issues that will require further congressional attention and decisions. These developments led to a recommendation by OTA's Technology Assessment Board, with encouragement from the Legislative Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, that OTA provide assistance on AIDS-related issues to the Congress on a sustained basis.

This third paper in OTA's series of AIDS-related issues reviews what is known about the effectiveness of AIDS education for the general population and for people with certain behaviors that put them at high risk of becoming infected with the AIDS virus. AIDS education consists of communicating how the virus is and is not spread, counseling people to change behaviors that put them at high risk of becoming infected, and perhaps testing for HIV infection and providing devices such as condoms or bleach to prevent infection. This paper summarizes what is known about the effectiveness of AIDS education programs and programs in other health-related areas. Also documented are AIDS education programs currently being funded by selected Federal agencies. What is known and not known about the effectiveness of past education can guide the design of future AIDS education and the research agendas of Federal agencies.

The preceding Staff Papers in this series were: *Do Insects Transmit AIDS?* (September 1987) and *AIDS and Health Insurance - An OTA Survey* (February 1988)(see inside back cover for information on how to order these publications). A subsequent Staff Paper, *The Impact of AIDS on the Kaiser Permanente Medical Care Program (Northern California Region)*, will analyze the cost impact of the AIDS epidemic on one of the largest prepaid health care systems in the country. Previous OTA reports addressing AIDS-related issues include: 1) *Blood Policy and Technology* (January 1985), 2) *Review of the Public Health Service's Response to AIDS* (Technical Memorandum, February 1985), and 3) *The Costs of AIDS and Other HIV Infections: Review of the Estimates* (Staff Paper, May 1987).



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HOW EFFECTIVE IS AIDS EDUCATION?

Health Program
Office of Technology Assessment
U.S. Congress
Washington, D.C.

May 1988

A Staff Paper in OTA's Series on
AIDS-Related Issues

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