

news from around THE world

by Seun Ojo

RECENT MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGH

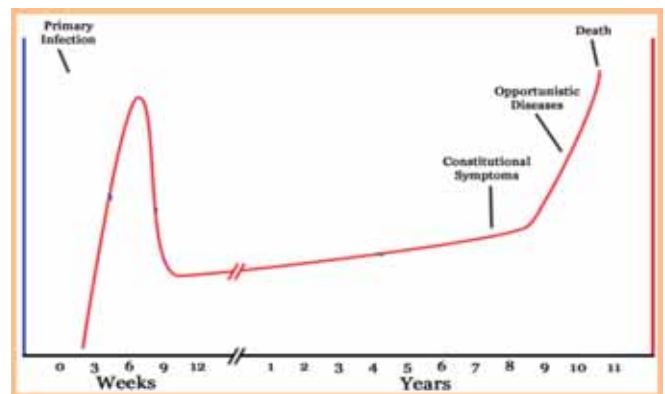
Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is one of the leading killer diseases, especially in the third world. The socio-economic impact has proved very costly to these countries through loss of productivity and reduced gross domestic product (GDP). HIV is the pathogen that infects its host and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) is the pathological manifestation of the disease visible about 10 years later. HIV is a retroviral micro-organism that uses its host DNA to increase in number; by incorporating the genetic make-up of its host with its own genetic make-up. This in essence makes it rather difficult to treat.

Treatment is very costly and a real strain on the health service therefore cost effective therapy is needed. Drugs that target the replication or growth of the virus at various stages are currently in use. These are called anti retroviral drugs.

A recent advancement in medicine

has highlighted a therapeutic avenue for cure known as gene therapy. Gene therapy allows the body's immune system to kill the virus thus preventing AIDS unlike the anti retroviral drugs that limit growth of the virus.

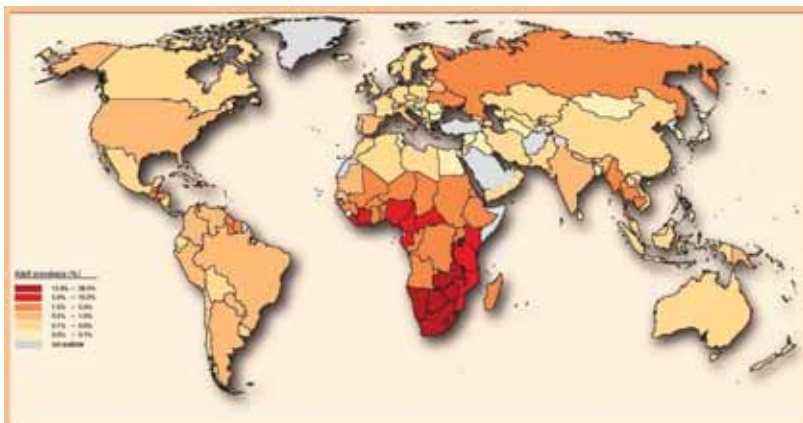
The gene therapy studied involved a bone marrow transplant from an HIV resistant individual, of which there are very few (1-3% in western population) into the HIV infected patient. These HIV resistant individuals lack a gene that prevents HIV from entering the host's white blood cells (CD4 T lymphocytes). The logic behind a bone marrow transplant is to deplete the HIV infected patients immune system and replace with a cross matched donor who lacks the gene (CCR5) that confers protection. The bone marrow is the site of haematopoiesis or formation of blood cells. Although theoretic-



cally feasible there are associated disadvantages with this procedure, for example depletion of the immune system significantly increases the likelihood of infection and there are too few HIV resistant donors.

This recent approach has generated significant interest in the field of immunotherapy and perhaps taken us a step further in finding a cure for HIV- AIDS.

Having said this, there still remains the fact, abstinence is the best approach to avoid HIV-AIDS and biblically, unless in marriage we MUST refrain from all sexual activity.



MUSLIM MAN WHO FOUND CHRIST BUT MAY LOSE ISLAMIC FAMILY

His first recollection of salvation started with the film Jesus of Nazareth. After watching this epic portrayal on the life of Jesus, this young Muslim boy was reduced to