

Preface



The Australian National University's Health Transition Centre was established to foster the study of the cultural, social and behavioural determinants of health, especially in the Third World. The Centre has had particularly strong historic links with sub-Saharan Africa. Consequently, when that region became the world's major theatre of the AIDS epidemic, it was inevitable that a prime focus of the research program would be the Third World AIDS epidemic.

Apart from continuing support from the Australian National University, especially from its National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health, *Health Transition Review* and the centre have been funded by the Rockefeller Foundation and the Ford Foundation.

The majority of funding for AIDS research in Africa has come from the Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation in the Third World (SAREC/SIDA) with other support from the Rockefeller Foundation and the Australian National University.

This supplement to *Health Transition Review, The Third World AIDS Epidemic*, is the fourth book published on AIDS research by the Centre.

In 1993 we published *Sexual Networking and HIV/AIDS in West Africa*, edited by John Caldwell, Gigi Santow, I.O. Orubuloye, Pat Caldwell and John Anarfi as a supplement to Volume 3 of *Health Transition Review*. This volume presents the work of the West African Research Group on Sexual Networking (WARGSN) which extended previously more geographically focused research throughout most of anglophone West Africa.

Then we published *Sexual Networking and AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa: Behavioural Research and the Social Context*, edited by I.O. Orubuloye, John C. Caldwell, Pat Caldwell and Gigi Santow. This volume comprises 14 key papers on an intensive research program in southwest Nigeria, based in Ondo State University, Nigeria.

It was followed by the supplement to Volume 4 of *Health Transition Review, AIDS Impact and Prevention in the Developing World: Demographic and Social Science Perspectives*, edited by John Cleland and Peter Way. This book is global in scope, and was published in conjunction with the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population and funded by the Population Investigation Committee of Britain.

The present book differs from its predecessors in that it is a collection of papers resulting from research produced from across the African continent, carried out between 1992 and 1995. The papers have been selected from four workshops held between 1994 and 1995. These were held in Kampala (Uganda), Cape Coast (Ghana), Ado-Ekiti (Nigeria) and Canberra (Australia).

The authors range from much published researchers to a considerable number who have never been published before, but who know their scenes intimately. All the papers focus on the social and behavioural aspects of AIDS, as in the Centre's previous AIDS books.

This collection, like the previous ones, also emphasizes the social, sexual and economic context of the disease both in the general population and in high-risk groups. However, there is here even greater stress on the social effects of the disease, on interventions and on care and counselling.

The collection ends with glances at areas which may well become more important in the future. The first emphasizes legal issues which the epidemic makes it imperative to face. The second is the more recent invasion of Asia by the epidemic. In that continent, the lessons learnt in sub-Saharan Africa may prove to be important guides.

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