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HIV/AIDS - Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow

by Ruth Liggat, Glasgow South Club, Scotland South Region, SIGBI

Dr. Sirkka-Liisa Valle managed in the short space of 45 minutes to give us a comprehensive history of HIV/AIDS and a look into the future. Women are particularly vulnerable to infection, and are often powerless to help prevent infection of their children. Whereas in the Western world ante-natal care (and testing), elective caesarean sections and cheap and easy alternatives to breast-feeding are available, this is not so in developing countries.

It was not all bad news, however. In Uganda and Senegal, and now in Thailand, effective programmes based on education, freely available condoms and life skills training, as in the SIAM project, are showing an effect on infection rates.

Dr. Valle finished by challenging us to make the epidemic more visible, to decrease the stigma of HIV/AIDS and to reduce the fear of discrimination of those who are infected. This disease will be with us for decades yet.