**Aids trials raise vital queries**

I have reservations about the Aids vaccine trials

going on in Nairobi. The vaccine contains

live strains of the HIV virus that have been

modified to reduce their reproduction and activity.

Little is known about the dangers of the

disabled viruses.

A renowned researcher in New England,

Massachusetts, United States, has raised concern

about using inactivated HIV viruses as a

vaccine. This kind of testing is outlawed here.

Viruses exist in the form of DNA. They

attack white blood cells by launching a coup

d'etat. They take charge of white blood cell

and multiply.

No process can guarantee that 100 per cent

of the viruses will be disabled in a given sample.

Injecting a 70 per cent disabled sample

into a healthy one leaves 30 per cent viruses to

multiply. The research hopes to demonstrate

that the 30 per cent of the live viruses does not

lead to development of Aids. It does not always

work. Beware Kenyans.

It would appear the researchers are out to

exploit poor ignorant Kenyans. This raises the

old age questions about racism.

Ibrahim Kagwima Mureu.

Boston. US.

Are Kenyans really naive or is it that we have no qualms about selling ourselves'? The idea of

testing an Aids vaccine appears great taken at

face value, but the issue is why this has to be

done in Kenya and South Africa.

This calls for closer scrutiny. Granted, the

number of Aids cases here is high but is this a

reason to use Africans as guinea pigs'? There

are hundreds of Aids cases in the United States

and Britain. They should have. been the first

people on which to carry out the Aids trials.

With the blessing of our medical experts the

West can introduce anything and test it on

people. This is despicable and should be immediately

stopped.

Can the Director of Medical Services, Prof

.Iulius Meme, make available to the public statistics

showing the number of individuals tested

and levels of success or failure'? They

should be readily available as I assume they

formed part of the criteria for allowing this

testing to be performed.

Incidentally if these statistics existed they

would be public information in Britain and the

United States. Does the promise of upgraded

medical facilities, free funding(!) and international

recognition outweigh African lives, Prof

Meme'?

Is it not strange that the drugs known to

work against Aids infections are deemed expensive

and unavailable to the Third world, but

a yet untested "vaccine" is to be injected into Kenyans at no cost at all to them') Except, of

course. the risks involved in \_testing this

substance! '

If these researchers really care, then they

should make the "expensive" drugs available

to us. They may certainly continue to explore

the "vaccine" possibilities in their laboratories.

or if they wish, on their own populace.

Milton Muigai.

Stockholm ..

The Kenyan volunteers to be to injected with

the. Aids virus stand a high chance of developing

HIV. Why'? That vaccine has never been

tested in the societies where it was developed, I

believe that ProfMeme knows the reason.

Prof MacMichea I said that "it will take five

to 10 years before you and him can know

whether this vaccine works or fails".

Those poor volunteers would have to die.

for Prof MacMicheal to conclude that the vaccine

does not work. Why sacrifice lives for experiments'?

Prof Meme, it's your job to protect the

health of all Kenyans as the man in charge of

medical services. It is, therefore. surprising

that the OMS is offering his fellow Kenyans

for life-threatening experimental trials, and

worst *bf* all, in exchange for "international

recognition" . Doris Adhiambo.

United States.

**Ignorance fuelling HIV spread**

Much has been said and many

newspaper articles and books

written on the Aids scourge, but

the. solution or cure remains elusive

worldwide.

Aids, as many have come to

realize, is a condition that grips

and reduces a once healthy person

to a mere walking skeleton! It is a

dreadful thing that must be fought

by all in society.

Educative books have been

written and awareness campaigns

mounted to curb against the

spread of HIV/Aids, in vain.

Why? Because it is not easy to

change man's attitude.

While we know most of the

cases of this killer disease in'

Kenya have been spread through

sexual intercourse, we continue to

bury our heads in the sand, not

willing to change our sexual

behavior.

As we approach the next century, we should try to eradicate ignorance.

Also, the issue of making

ourselves popular for a little while

should be done away with for it

makes us regret later.

I was surprised to hear that

some people are shocked to learn

that there are still misconceptions

among our people (especially illiterate

rural inhabitants) about

Aids. In some remote hinterlands

of Bungoma and Busia districts,

some people still believe that Aids is a curse from God or something

to do with the family planning

campaign.

Recently, some members and

officials of a non-governmental

organisation escaped unhurt when

rowdy locals in Bungoma confronted

and threatened to cut them

up.

They said they would not allow

these people to preach about a

non-existent Aids threat. To these

people, the Aids campaign is a

ploy to deny them their sexual enjoyment.

It is these people who indeed

require thorough education about

the Aids menace.

Parents, teachers, leaders and

counsellors should be on the

frontline in campaigns to discuss

Aids, especially at forums for

young people.

It is painful to note that as the

number of those afflicted with

Aids increases, many young

people are being forced out of

schools and colleges to look after

their sick parents at home.

Wananchi should understand

that Aids is there. It should be understood

that it is found everywhere,

not only in the towns. It is

in remote areas like Ndivisi, Kamukuywa

or Malakisi in Bungoma

District.'

Antony Onglao Nyongesa.

Kimilili.