

## VIDEO REVIEW

---

### **“Você Sabe o Que É AIDS?” - (Do you know what AIDS is?)**

**Executive Production: Projeto Sinais de Vida: HIV/AIDS, Prevenção e Assistência Para Surdos, Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ).**

**SPONSORSHIP: PROGRAMA NACIONAL DE DOENÇAS SEXUALMENTE TRANSMISSÍVEIS/AIDS, MINISTÉRIO DA SAÚDE.**

---

The level of information of the American deaf about AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases is very low, and not surprisingly there are data showing a high prevalence of HIV infection in some communities of deaf in the United States. This is not an American phenomenon, it probably happens worldwide. The deaf as a group have absorbed very little of the overwhelming amount of information about HIV infection and its prevention that is released by the media almost on a daily basis. The truth that has been ignored by most of the people and agencies who are involved with education on AIDS is that the deaf are a particular group of people that cannot be reached by standard ways of communication. Most of the deaf do not master the language of their fellow country citizens or have a limited vocabulary; some are completely illiterate. They can learn to communicate between themselves using sign language, if they have access to special education, which is not always available. Sign language is a powerful means for communication among them, but not between them and the speaking and hearing world.

“Você sabe o que é AIDS?” (Do you know what AIDS is?), a video released in November 1997, was designed to reach the Brazilian deaf and hard-of-hearing. As part of a project dealing with several aspects of education of the deaf (Projeto Sinais de Vida [Project Signs of Life]) the video is the result of the work of a multiprofessional team which includes many deaf among them. Under the leadership of linguist Eulalia Fernandes, a lecturer at the Rio de Janeiro State University (UERJ), the video consists of a 45-minute play performed by deaf actors using the Brazilian sign language (sign languages differ from country to country, for instance the Portuguese sign language is different from its

Brazilian counterpart). The text (there is a version with subtitles in an easy and simplified Portuguese aimed at the deaf who do not master the sign language) is light, with a correct dose of humor, and with a comprehensive content as to risk behaviors for HIV infection and the preventive measures that should be taken to avoid acquiring it. The dialogues include most of the misconceptions and prejudices which used to be common at the beginning of the AIDS epidemic, and that unfortunately are yet to disappear from the hearing world. The correct information comes right after a wrong concept is expressed by one of the actors, and from time to time there is the intervention of a narrator who summarizes the topic and makes sure that the right message is given.

Financially supported by the Brazilian Ministry of Health, the video is distributed free of charge for interested institutions which deal with the health and education of the deaf\*. The video can also be copied and distributed freely insofar as it is fully reproduced and it is not commercialized.

“Você sabe o que é AIDS?” is attractive and instructive even for those who can hear and speak, and as a bonus gives the viewer an understanding of the limitations but also of the achievements of the deaf. This video, a beautiful work of the UERJ’s team, is an important and highly necessary instrument for the control of AIDS among the deaf in Brazil.

Sérgio de Andrade Nishioka, MD, MSc  
Departamento de Clínica Médica  
Centro de Ciências Biomédicas  
Universidade Federal de Uberlândia  
Uberlândia, MG, Brasil

---

\* Write to Projeto Sinais de Vida, Rua São Francisco Xavier 524, sala 3030, Bloco E, 20599-900 Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil.