Compare and Contrast the Bubonic Plague, SmallPox and AIDS

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There is no doubt to say that the Bubonic Plague, Smallpox and AIDS were the three worst illnesses to contract during the 1300’s. Nowadays whenever we are sick we can go to the doctor and be prescribed antibiotics or other medication to cure us. Back then that was not an option, medical sciences were undeveloped and not properly understood.

There are many differences between Bubonic Plague, Smallpox and AIDS. First being disease structure. The Bubonic Plague was the most devastating between the three. Fleas were vectors to carry the disease from person to person or animal to animal. Smallpox had a much different structure compared to the Bubonic Plague. Smallpox was a virus that was brick like shaped with double stranded DNA genome. AIDS was very similar to Smallpox but is still very different. Aids has a spherical shape and is considered a retrovirus. Retroviruses contain RNA instead of DNA, but AIDS is not a virus that travels through the air. When comparing Smallpox and AIDS they are similar because they are both viruses. In contrast to Smallpox and AIDS, the Bubonic Plague is a bacteria carried by a vector that causes the disease.

The way the diseases spread are all different from each other. In the 1300’s the most effective way for the illnesses to spread was through the contact of others. The way that the Bubonic Plague spread was through fleas on rats and pigs. The animals lived in polluted cities that were perfect breading grounds for the vectors of the illness. They then found a human host to hook on to, infected the host and finally killed them or in some cases killed animals as well. The fleas would then jump from person to person or from animal to animal. Smallpox was spread much easier than the Bubonic Plague. Smallpox was spread from person to person by a virus, if someone sneezed on you you could catch the illness. Also if you used towels, blankets or something that an infected person used you were most likely to catch the disease. AIDS
differed from the bubonic plague but was similar to smallpox. AIDS was transmitted through sexual contact or other bodily fluids. It was often called “gay cancer” because homosexuals often contracted it. Unlike the Bubonic Plague and Smallpox, you could not get AIDS from sneezing or using blankets. Because medical science was not developed, many people had the wrong understanding of how a person could contract AIDS. Smallpox and the Bubonic Plague are very comparable because you can get them by having close contact with people and things that they have had contact with. Knowing that a person was sick, people were told to stay away from the sick because of their signs.

There were many warning signs of these diseases. The Bubonic Plague had very few signs and symptoms. When you contracted the illnesses you only lived for a very short time after the symptoms occurred. The symptoms were fever, chills, aching, swollen lymph nodes and then finally, death. The disease overtook the body before it could fight back. Smallpox was the opposite, it was a slow death compared to the plague. You would not get symptoms until a few days after you contracted the virus. The first symptom would be a fever, but after about four days, your temperature dropped and you would start to feel better. After you would feel better a rash would appear all over the body and soon after that blindness would set in. Then about two weeks from contracting the virus death occurs. AIDS was very different from the two diseases, today people can be living with AIDS and no one even knows. The symptoms of AIDS are swollen lymph nodes and you often get very sick because your immune system is weakened. Many people with AIDS do not even know that they have the virus because symptoms can show up years after the virus is contracted. The virus attacks the T-cells in your blood which are the cells of your immune system they then attack the body and if the condition is not treated right
death occurs. AIDS compares to Smallpox and the Bubonic Plague because AIDS symptoms do not show up for years while Smallpox and the Bubonic Plague take less than a week. But Smallpox differs from the Bubonic Plague because symptoms take around seven to ten days to appear. All three of the diseases still have many symptoms though.

These diseases caused more deaths in the 1300’s than in any other time period. The Bubonic Plague was the most devastating of them because once it started to spread it wasn't stopping. It killed off one third of the world's population and was the biggest disease that had ever occurred in the world at the time. Smallpox killed many people as well. Smallpox killed thirty million people during its time. AIDS is still a big problem today, but during the middle ages it killed around 8 million and affected many more. The Bubonic Plague differs from AIDS and Smallpox because it was the most devastating but it differs from Smallpox because Smallpox has killed more people. All of the disease compare to each other because they all have a very large death toll.

There was a very few number of previous outbreaks of the Bubonic Plague. It came from Italy on trade ships that had carried the fleas which left the ship, on to the new land on their way to spread the disease. Smallpox came from Egypt. There were many theories about where AIDS came from. Some believed they it came from monkey bites and others, God. When comparing the Bubonic Plague, Smallpox and AIDS they were all similar because they all have occurred before the large epidemic took place.

There was many ways that people learned to contain the disease. The towns people boarded up peoples houses that had Smallpox and the Bubonic Plague. They would quarantine them until they died, then left them in their homes so that the disease would not spread any
further. They learned to contain Smallpox by inoculation. This made people who received this treatment immune to the disease only one fourth of the people that were inoculated died from Smallpox. During the Smallpox epidemic the Pope laid his bed in between two fires to burn off the disease and to protect himself. People with AIDS were mistreated and killed nowadays they are sometimes judged but not nearly as much as they were in the middle ages.

Religious zeal increased a lot during this time period. Many people lived by the motto of “live today die tomorrow” says the book *When Plague Strikes*. Many people went to church to ask for forgiveness and to have god protect them from these illnesses. They also went to pay for their sins that they had done. They wanted any protection that they could receive. Many people rebelled against the churches because they ended up locking themselves up when their services were needed the most. After the epidemic passed it took a lot for people to start accepting the churches again. The churches lived by the motto “Every man for them self”. They protected themselves when the rest of their country needed them the most.

Illnesses had many effects on social and political impacts. The Bubonic Plague made employees greatly valued because it was so limited and hard to find work. The Smallpox was used was a war weapon by throwing dead bodies at the enemy. Another thing in the war that it was used as a killing mechanism. Bags of pillows, blankets and sheets were given to the native American chief to take back to their troops, they were infected with Smallpox and infected a large portion of the army. A social impact that it had was crime rate increased because people had the thought of live today die tomorrow. They all figured that they were going to die, so what did it matter if they did the wrong things.
Saying all of those facts and statistics about the three most deadly disease during the 1300’s medical science has came a very long way. Not nearly as many people are dying from these simple illnesses like colds as they did back then. The standard of living is much higher which betters the world as a whole. This time period was the worst of history.
References


