Hallmarks of AIDS included a loss of essential immune system cells (CD4 cells) and the development of opportunistic infections (such as Pneumocystis pneumonia) and cancers (such as Kaposi's sarcoma), diseases that occur much more often in people with compromised immune systems. Through investigative journalism, Shilts chronicles the early discovery and spread of HIV/AIDS and government indifference, as the government neglectfully allowed the disease to flourish in queer communities. In 1993, HBO adapted the book into an HBO film of the same name. Side effects from HIV medications became less common and less severe. Arthur Ammann recommends the best books on the HIV/AIDS Plague. Lethal Decisions: The Unnecessary Deaths of Women and Children from HIV/AIDS by Arthur Ammann. Read. The human suffering isn’t captured in the word ‘epidemic.’ I think, from a historical point of view, ‘plague’ better describes the broad impact of AIDS. You’re also talking about the emotional impact. Yes, because for those who were intimately involved, you were dealing with patients that you knew well. I’m deliberately taking the side of the women and children, as if they’re people that I know personally. I want to defend them. I don’t want them to lose their dignity by being diminished or becoming less valuable.