

**MODEL EXPERIMENTAL SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF PATRAS
ENGLISH COURSE, 2013-2014**

Living in fear: African Albinos

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Albinism is a congenital disorder characterized by absence or defect of Tyrosinase which is an enzyme involved in the production of melanin. An organism with complete absence of melanin is called an albino. They may also suffer from a number of vision defects such as photophobia, nystagnus and astigmatism. In physical terms albinos commonly need sun protection because of their white skin.

Social and cultural challenges



Albinism is often a source of ridicule, discrimination or even fear and violence. Many cultures around the world have developed beliefs regarding albinos. In African countries, such as Tanzania or Burundi, “witchdoctors” make potions using parts of albinos’ bodies. Unfortunately, this kind of medicine is accepted by the local people.

A shocking story

As an example of this unfairness, in 2008 a man, Nyerrere, was murdered in front of his family while he was eating dinner. A gang of four immobilized him and cut off his arms and legs with machetes. Nyerrere was clearly being targeted for being an albino..



NOAH

In Order to assist and support people with albinism an organization called National Organization for Albinism and Hypopigmentation (NOAH) was created. Since 1982 NOAH through publications and events helps the acceptance of albinism all around the world.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ATTENTION

