

TRANSLATING RESEARCH EVIDENCE INTO POLICY: THE NSW HIV STRATEGY 2021-2025

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Background/Purpose:

Not all groups have benefited equally from recent successes in NSW in the last five years in HIV prevention, testing and treatment. The research evidence developed by the NSW HIV Prevention Partnership Project ('The Project') was integral to the development of the NSW HIV Strategy 2021-2025. The Project was a National Health and Medical Research Council funded monitoring and evaluation project led by the Kirby Institute and the NSW Ministry of Health alongside sector partners.

Approach:

The HIV Strategy was developed in consultation with clinicians, general practitioners, researchers and affected communities. The Project developed several evidence briefs and two surveillance reports. This evidence framed the problem for stakeholders completing written submissions and identifying priority interventions at Strategy consultation workshops.

Outcomes/Impact:

To make new gains, the Strategy focuses on reducing stigma; eliminating infections preventable in NSW; and connecting overseas-born people who acquired HIV abroad with testing and care. The Project's evidence supported the renewed focus on sub-populations who have not experienced the same level of recent success including: overseas-born men who have sex with men (MSM); MSM aged under 25 years; and MSM living in areas with lower concentrations of gay-identified men. Based on the evidence, prevention and testing initiatives were tailored and will contribute to elimination with better value for money.

Innovation and Significance:

The Strategy introduces a world-leading target for a 90% reduction in the rate of preventable HIV infection to achieve the ambitious goal of 'virtual elimination of HIV transmission'. The Strategy aims to achieve 90% prevention coverage: at least one form of HIV prevention among MSM having sex with casual partners; and 90% PrEP coverage among MSM having condomless sex with casual partners. The Project provided a rapid feedback system to guide the Strategy, which was particularly valuable during COVID-19, with health staff and capacity diverted.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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