



**Joint Australasian Sexual Health and
HIV&AIDS Conferences
VIRTUAL**

Monday 6 - Thursday 9 September, 2021

Dear Ivy,

It's day three of the [2021 Joint Australasian Sexual Health + HIV&AIDS Conferences](#) and we have another fascinating day ahead. Today's speakers will take us through a wide range of areas, from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health to vaccine and diagnostic test development.

But first let's take a look at some highlights from yesterday.

Tuesday's session highlights

HIV/AIDS 40 years on

It's difficult to think of a more powerful way to start the day than with the paper we heard from Professor David Caron at the University of Michigan. In his intensely personal look back on 40 years living with HIV, he reflected on the sense of belonging that being HIV-positive brings, and how academic and popular media continue to show competing narratives about the role of

activism in AIDS history. Caron highlighted the echoes of political failures of the 80s in the profiles of new HIV infections today, and for that matter COVID deaths. “The present moment is bursting with the same urgency, despair and possibility,” he said.

Mass STI screening: more harm than good?

The final plenary keynote was presented by Chris Kenyon, Head of STI Unit at the Institute of Tropical Medicine, Antwerp, focusing on mass screening for gonorrhoea and chlamydia in men who have sex with men (MSM). Kenyon presented compelling evidence that over-screening for STIs could be doing more harm than good, encouraging an over-reliance on antibiotics that could accelerate the emergence of antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

Molecular approaches for better STI vaccines and diagnostics

In Tuesday’s **Sexual Health Invited Speaker Session** we heard how new approaches are helping to accurately detect and track STIs, as well as prevent them.

Molecular biology techniques are being used to understand antibiotic resistance in gonorrhoea as well as the different strains of syphilis that are moving through populations in Australia and overseas. Researchers are also investigating whether mouthwash affects oral microbiota in MSM.

New viability assay technologies are able to more reliably detect tricky bacteria like *Mycoplasma genitalium*, and in time, they will hopefully reduce unnecessary treatments, confirm sensitivity to antibiotics and allow surveillance of resistance.

Vaccine development for STIs is an ongoing body of work. Researches are focusing on Vaccines for Trichomoniasis, gonorrhoea, HIV, syphilis, chlamydia and HSV, with a range of candidates currently in development and testing.

Learning from the response to COVID-19

Despite challenges faced in the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine, Australia’s Indigenous communities have been highly successful in responding to the challenges of COVID-19. Aspects such as the direct link between Aboriginal community-controlled health services, Government and local leadership, the use of telehealth and point-of-care testing technology, and the involvement of

community members in communication, should be used as best practice examples in other areas of health, particularly sexual health. Those were clear messages in yesterday's session on **Sexual Health and COVID-19 – lessons shared from the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Sector**.

Rethinking women's experiences of HIV

The experiences of women living with HIV can be misunderstood and even discounted, a focus for yesterday's session **Rethinking women and HIV: new paradigms for prevention and care**. It's often a matter of stigma. Kirsty Machon from Positive Women, VIC presented data showing how few women are using pre-exposure prophylaxis to protect themselves from HIV, and spoke about the difficulty many experience in requesting it. Heather Maugwagwa, also from Positive Women, VIC, raised similar themes of exclusion, outlining her study into barriers to women participants in HIV research.

Sex and the law

One of yesterday's final sessions, **Regulating Sex**, discussed the legal barriers and enablers to health, health promotion, community-led responses and services.

There are a range of direct and indirect laws that criminalise and stigmatise people living with HIV. In the session we heard how HIV criminalisation increases transmission risks, drives stigma and causes people to become hostile, suspicious and litigious.

Speakers discussed the ways stigma associated with sex work impacts multiple layers of the criminal justice system. We heard how sex workers do not trust police, and will often not approach them in the face of sexual assault. Decriminalisation of sex work is a good first step, but cultural and systemic change is necessary for protection and justice.

All sessions are available to watch on demand in the virtual event portal.

Today's sessions not to be missed:

Outstanding leaders recognised; Indigenous engagement in sexual health; options for HIV prevention and more

Today we're excited to present the **Levinia Crooks Emerging Leader Award, presented by last year's winner**. Since 2018 this award has honoured the legacy of the late Adjunct Professor Levinia Crooks AM—ASHM Chief Executive Officer from 1999-2017. Two awards are given annually to recognise the outstanding work of emerging leaders, one in the fields of viral hepatitis and another for BBVs/STIs.

Our first keynote speaker today is Rob Monaghan who will be discussing **Novel Initiatives to enhance Indigenous people's engagement in Sexual health services – A combination STI prevention approach in young Aboriginal men**.

Our second keynote address will be the David Cooper lecture delivered by Linda-Gail Bekker, University of Cape Town, South Africa on **Extending the options for HIV Prevention: key to reducing transmission**.

At **11:30am** there is a fascinating line-up in the **Clinical Management & Therapeutics** session with papers addressing cardiovascular disease management for people living with HIV, HIV and cognitive ageing, scepticism about U=U, and the impact of COVID-19 on HIV care.

In the afternoon we'll be looking at **digital technologies** and the opportunities and challenges they bring for sexual health and HIV health promotion, a discussion complemented by the evening's session on **Practice and policy implications for Telehealth**.

At **6:00pm** there is an invited speaker session on the Clinical Management &

Therapeutics theme discussing **Transgender Health**. It's a great opportunity to hear about the provision of gender affirming care in a primary care setting, the scale-up of PrEP to trans and gender diverse people in New York, and HIV, PrEP and trans and gender diverse healthcare for young people in Bangkok.

Activity: Breathe, Stretch & Ask with Vanessa Wagner

Join 'Un-Agony Aunt with Vanessa Wagner' – Wellness session



Session 1 – **Wednesday 8 September** **3:20 – 4:00pm**

Join the delightful Vanessa Wagner on a cognitive and cerebral unpacking journey of breathing, pondering, un-thinking, asking and letting go. All questions answered compassionately and innovatively.

Session 2 – **Thursday 9 September** **3:20pm – 4:00pm**

Reacquaint yourself with Vanessa Wagner as she takes you on a corporeal journey of release, inner love and unbridled physical self-expression. No experience preferred. Please bring your own mat and health insurance.

What you're saying on Twitter

There were some great conversations on Twitter again yesterday, engaging with speakers and delegates on topics such as the experiences of women living with HIV, ending HIV stigma, and what sexual health can learn from the experience of COVID-19.

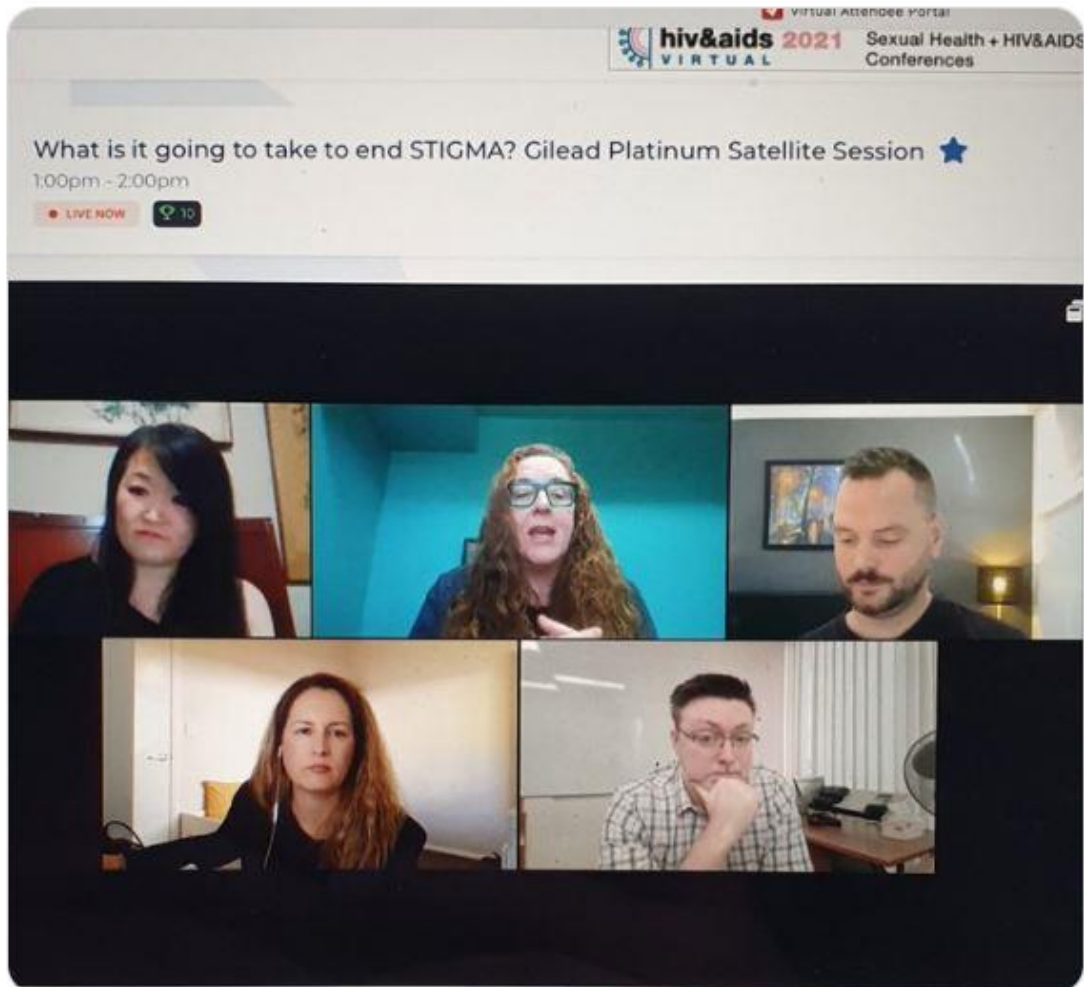


VAHAN
@VAHANetwork



@carlatreloar: "Stigma is enacted when power is present"

#sh2021 #HIVAIDS2021





Karen Freilich
@KarenFreilich

...

Contraception as peace of mind 🙌🙌🙌

#SHINESA #SH2021 @ASHMMedia #HIVAIDS2021





Dr Ruby Grant
@notoriousrfg



Honoured to be part of this pioneering symposium on bi+ sexual health today! Here are my recommendations for practitioners based on my @UTAS_ PhD research.
[#HIVAIDS2021](#) [#SH2021](#)

 **ASHM** @ASHMMedia · 18h

Some practical recommendations include:

[Show this thread](#)

Implications: **Practical recommendations**

- Bi+ inclusive practice is well within the skills of practitioners providing person-centred care.
- Practitioners may require further training in the use of inclusive, gender neutral language.
- Women's sexual health services should avoid using cis-heteronormative and monosexist language and assumptions in their practices.
- Broader community awareness and support for Bi+ people of all genders.



Join the conversation on Twitter using [#HIVAIDS2021](#) and [#SH2021](#)

We love hearing your thoughts and comments on the sessions you're attending. Please keep using the hashtags [#HIVAIDS2021](#) and [#SH2021](#) so we and others can follow and re-tweet you (we'll be tweeting from [@ashmmedia](#)).

If you have any questions or technical troubles, contact us at conference@ashm.org.au or on **+61 2 8204 0770**.

Have a great and insightful day at **#HIVAIDS2021** and **#SH2021!**

Cheers,

Bill & ASHM Conference and Events Team.

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[Conference Website](#)



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