

# **NUDGEATHONS TO CONTROL HIV: DESIGNING STRATEGIES USING BEHAVIOURAL ECONOMICS**

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## **Background/Purpose:**

To end the HIV/AIDS epidemic as a public health threat by 2030, we must continue to create local solutions, especially to implement proven strategies directed towards difficult-to-reach subpopulations. To accomplish this, lessons can be learnt from the successes in behavioural change from other disciplines.

## **Approach:**

Behavioural economics is a discipline that studies how individuals make choices within complex contexts, blending insights from psychology with traditional economics of decision-making. Its core premise is that human behaviours are subconsciously influenced by means of choice architecture, which refers to actively designing the environment (a 'nudge') within which a choice is made to encourage better choices.

## **Outcomes/Impact:**

On January 17<sup>th</sup> 2020, we conducted the inaugural Nudgeathon (one-day hackathon event to create 'nudges' or behavioural interventions) for HIV and sexual health in Melbourne. We brought together 32 participants from different organizations (government, non-government organizations, academics, representatives of target populations) with diverse skills (clinicians, epidemiologists, behavioural economists, policymakers, communication and program design experts, community-advocates). The group learnt about behavioural economics with case-studies of its successful application in various fields. Study investigators allocated participants into four teams ensuring each team consisted of members with different skills. Each team was asked to create nudges for either improving HIV/STI testing or PrEP use among overseas-born gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (MSM) in Australia.

## **Innovation and Significance:**

This is the world-first Nudgeathon for developing HIV prevention strategies. We demonstrate that Nudgeathons are quick and efficient ways to engage multiple stakeholders and develop potential solutions to complex problems. Learning to better shape the choices for staying HIV negative will help us in our goals to finally end the HIV epidemic.

## **Disclosure of Interest Statement:**

We received funding from the Monash Warwick Alliance Grant to fund the event. All authors declare they do not have any conflicts of interest.