

# **SUPPORTING THE HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE TO STAMP OUT SCEPTICISM ABOUT U=U: THE 2020 ASHM GUIDANCE FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS**

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## **BACKGROUND/PURPOSE**

This is the third version of guidance from the Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health Medicine (ASHM) for healthcare providers (HCP) to better understand the message and evidence behind **Undetectable=Untransmissible (U=U)**. As the evidence mounts and our understanding of how the message of U=U has implications which profoundly affects the lives of people living with HIV, ASHM remains committed to ensuring that clinicians and other HCP are kept abreast of the latest scientific developments on how antiretroviral treatment (ART) for people living with HIV prevents onward transmission of HIV to their sexual partners.

## **APPROACH**

This guidance document follows international best practice by providing a set of five recommendations for HCP to follow based upon up to date advice from other countries and international health agencies. The most critical message in this guidance is for HCP to inform their patients of this scientific knowledge: keeping their HIV viral load at an undetectable level by consistently taking HIV medications means that they **will not pass HIV to others through sex.**

## **OUTCOMES/IMPACT**

As well as providing suggested dialogue to use with patients, the guidance includes an infographic and an annotated bibliography of the most recent international research and evidence about the use of U=U in healthcare settings. HCP can feel increasingly confident to reinforce with patients that maintaining a durable viral suppression (HIV/RNA <200 copies/mL) **eliminates the risk of the sexual transmission of HIV** and this resource provides the extensive evidence and research to support this message.

## **INNOVATION AND SIGNIFICANCE**

The application of U=U is more than just an immunological concept and is recognised as having a profound impact upon quality of life. We must ensure that the community response to HIV and the healthcare providers work in tandem towards the best possible health outcomes for people living with HIV.

## **Disclosure of Interest Statementb**

None. No pharmaceutical grants were received for the development of this resource.