

More than science: Ensuring we leave no-one behind as we strive to end the epidemic

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Ending HIV. 90-90-90. U=U. PrEP4All. Excitement around the phenomenal biomedical progress towards ending the HIV epidemic has led to some very catchy slogans, as well as some remarkable achievements - reducing new infections and improving quality and quantity of life for many people living with HIV in Australia and around the world. There is, however, another slogan that's become lost in the mix: 'Leave no-one behind'.

This presentation explores the unintended consequences of our determined focus on biomedical interventions, and the associated costs of reduced efforts to address the intersecting epidemics of HIV-related stigma, discrimination, and criminalisation. It includes concrete Australian and international examples of ways in which researchers, clinicians, scientists, policymakers and community-based organisations can work together to move beyond slogans to ensure that those who are most marginalised and disenfranchised in (or locked out of) our communities, are part of our HIV response.

Science and human rights are not separate or conflicting entities: they are inextricably linked. Only a collective refocusing on a human rights agenda – including ending all forms of HIV criminalisation in Australia once and for all – will maximise the potential of scientific and medical endeavours and ensure that the benefits of scientific advances are enjoyed by all.
