Lessons from HIV for the Covid-19 response

Gairdner Global Perspectives Panel, 21 October 2020

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Global burden of COVID-19 and HIV

In 2019, worldwide there were:
38M PLHIV | 690,000 HIV deaths | 1.7M new infections

1 Jan – 16 Oct 2020, worldwide there were:
39M Covid-19 cases | 1,1M deaths
10 lessons from HIV for the Covid-19 response

1. Centrality of scientific evidence in the response
2. Leaders need to be consistent role models
3. Know your epidemic – Know your response
4. Testing - value of a rapid point-of-care diagnostic
5. Importance of mutual interdependence
6. Prevention toolbox essential
7. Challenge of behaviour change
8. Community engagement
9. Addressing gender inequity
10. Striving for Universal Health Care
Centrality of scientific evidence in the response

Does HIV cause AIDS? Can a virus cause a syndrome? How? It can't, because a syndrome is a group of diseases resulting from acquired immune deficiency.

Thabo Mbeki

“We bought a tremendous amount of...hydroxychloroquine, ...And there are signs that it works on [coronavirus], some very strong signs,”
April 5

Donald Trump
Leaders need to be consistent role models

BBC NEWS

Sex-ban Swazi king pays fine

King Mswati III faced protests outside his palace
By Hilary Andersson in Johannesburg

The King of Swaziland, bowing to pressure from angry young women, has fined himself a cow for violating a chastity vow he imposed on the rest of the country.

The Telegraph

Dominic Cummings facing calls to be sacked after breaching lockdown rules

The Prime Minister's chief adviser was spotted near his parents' home despite Downing Street saying he was self-isolating at home.
“Know your epidemic - Know your response”

Data-driven plan for the response

HIV hotspots

South Africa: Hotspot identification and mitigation

Covid-19 clusters in Nelson Mandela Bay district

Guidelines for second generation HIV surveillance: an update: Know your epidemic
Testing: Value of a rapid point of care diagnostics

- Testing for HIV initially cumbersome – ELISA needed to be confirmed by WB
- Rapid evolution in technology – rapid PoC antibody test
- Testing important gateway to prevention and treatment

- Rapid sequencing of SARS-CoV-2 → quickly established PCR testing
- Rapid evolution in technology – rapid PoC PCR, antibody or antigen test now available
- Testing is the gateway to quarantine / isolation and treatment
Importance of mutual interdependence in HIV

“The AIDS movement demonstrates that with a shared vision, shared responsibility and through global solidarity and leadership of people living with HIV, affected communities and individual action, we can change the course of history.”
– UNAIDS 2015

- **Global solidarity** – essential for access to life-saving medication, e.g. Global Fund, UNITAID, PEPFAR
Importance of mutual interdependence in Covid-19

**Initial - government action**
- Anxiety
- Institutional power over people
- Stay-at-home orders / Lockdown

**Pivot – prevention approach**
- Agency
- Individuals power within people
- Public health interventions

**Subsequent - Individual action**
- Self-efficacy
- Motivated individuals power to act for prevention

**To reach – collective community action**
- Collectivism
- Motivated communities power for collective action
- Ubuntu
  “I am, because you are”

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**Motivated communities**

**Ubuntu**

“I am, because you are”
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Prevention toolbox essential - Choose the combination of strategies appropriate to the situation
Challenge of behaviour change

- Challenge of “Know - Do” gap
- Counterproductive scare tactics
- Importance of supporting behaviour change
Community engagement:
“Do things with people - not on people”

The team consists of leaders from faith-based organisations, civil society and labour unions.
Addressing gender inequity

Coronavirus putting women’s careers at risk
Helen Letchfield, JUNE 22, 2020

Women are losing more jobs than men in the coronavirus economy

The Economic Virulence of COVID Weighs Heavily on both Women and the Young
September 21, 2020
Striving for Universal Health Care

AIDS 2000 conference
Galvanised the call for universal access to HIV treatment

Scaling-up towards universal access to HIV prevention, treatment and care

Report of the WHO-UNAIDS Joint Regional Technical Briefing on Universal Access

Racial disparities in Covid

Black & Indigenous Americans experience highest death tolls from COVID-19
Cumulative actual COVID-19 mortality rates per 100,000, by race and ethnicity, April 13-Oct. 13, 2020

- 1 in 920 Black Americans has died (or 108.4 deaths per 100,000)
- 1 in 1,840 White Americans has died (or 54.4 deaths per 100,000)
- 1 in 2,200 Asian Americans has died (or 45.4 deaths per 100,000)

Number of people receiving antiretroviral therapy: 2010–2019

- 2010: 7.5 million
- 2011: 9.1 million
- 2012: 10.9 million
- 2013: 12.9 million
- 2014: 15 million
- 2015: 17.1 million
- 2016: 19.5 million
- 2017: 21.7 million
- 2018: 24.5 million
- 2019: 25.4 million
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