

ASHM 2008: Unity against criminalisation

Created 25 Nov 2008 - 11:25am

At the opening plenary of the 20th Australasian Society of HIV Medicine ([ASHM](#) [1]Australasian Society for HIV Medicine. The peak Australasian organisation representing the medical and health sector in HIV/AIDS and related areas.) Conference in Perth on July 17-20, the Presidents of ASHM, [AFAO](#) [2]Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations. AFAO is the peak non-government organisation representing Australia's community-based response to HIV/AIDS. AFAO's work includes education, policy, advocacy and international projects. and NAPWA all condemned recent trends by governments around the world to criminalise the transmission of HIV.

Speaking in the same week that [Hector Scott was jailed in the ACT](#) [3] on the basis of that he was HIV+ and a sex worker, Dr Graham Brown, President of AFAO said that "turning to legislative and punitive responses have never been shown to have any impact on HIV transmissions" and that a public health approach should be taken whenever possible. Dr Jonathan Anderson, President of ASHM said that, whatever the legal issues in the Scott case, the ACT government appeared to have bypassed protocols to consult with community and apply public health interventions and had rushed down a legal path instead.

At the conference the three presidents joined with Executive Directors of AIDS Councils, Scarlet Alliance, AIVL and HIV research centres in signing a statement 'that laws that criminalise HIV-positive people should be repealed' and the new National Guidelines 'for responding to the rare cases where an individual is placed at risk of HIV, with legal action as a last resort, should now be implemented'.

The conference provided delegates with updates from the recent Mexico World Conference with a presentation by Professor Roy Gulick from Cornell University in the US giving an excellent summary on current thinking on the [effectiveness](#) [4](Of a drug or treatment). The maximum ability of a drug or treatment to produce a result regardless of dosage. A drug passes efficacy trials if it is effective at the dose tested and against the illness for which it is prescribed. In the standard procedure, Phase II clinical trials gauge efficacy, and Phase III trials confirm it. of new drugs such as duranavir, etravirine, maraviroc and raltegravir and new drugs in the pipeline, giving hope to those whose [virus](#) [5]A small infective organism which is incapable of reproducing outside a host cell. had developed [resistance](#) [6]HIV which has mutated and is less susceptible to the effects of one or more anti-HIV drugs is said to be resistant. to current treatments.

- [clinical research](#)
- [Criminalisation of HIV transmission](#)

Links:

[1] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/382>

[2] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/385>

[3] <http://www.napwa.org.au/node/945>

[4] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/486>

[5] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/125>

[6] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/109>