

## Cure must be a priority

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Finding a cure for HIV must be prioritised, said Sharon Lewin of Melbourne's Monash University, in a keynote address at the opening session of the AIDS 2010 conference.

Thanks to [antiretroviral](#) [1]A medication or other substance which is active against retroviruses such as HIV. therapy, many people with HIV have a near-normal life expectancy. But Lewin stressed that our prognosis is still poorer than that of HIV negative people, and that even very low levels of HIV replication can cause damage.

At a pre-conference session, Steven Deeks of the University of California, San Francisco, explained that very low viral loads were contributing to the development of health problems such as heart and [liver](#) [2]A large organ, located in the upper right abdomen, which assists in digestion by metabolising carbohydrates, fats and proteins, stores vitamins and minerals, produces amino acids, bile and cholesterol, and removes toxins from the blood. disease.

'There's some sort of HIV-related problem that's causing people to get sick earlier than they otherwise would have,' he said.

The long-term costs of HIV therapy were also highlighted by Lewin, who noted that to treat 80% of eligible patients in resource-limited settings would cost US\$35 billion by 2030.

Latent infected T-cells, and reservoirs of the [virus](#) [3]A small infective organism which is incapable of reproducing outside a host cell. in locations such as the brain and gut, will need to be eradicated for a cure to be achieved, said Lewin.

Interleukin 7 (IL-7) is being investigated as a possible therapy for these latent cells and reservoirs. The aim is to activate resting cells and flush HIV out of hiding. Another strategy uses compounds called histone deacetylase (HDAC) inhibitors to 'turn on' HIV [genes](#) [4]The most basic unit of genetic information.. However, a cure isn't just around the corner.

'The international conference in Vienna will not be the conference where we announce a cure,' Lewin concluded, 'but it will mark the beginning of a future where we seriously prioritise finding a cure.'

- [Defeating HIV](#)
- [conference reports](#)
- [International AIDS Conference](#)
- [news](#)
- [The global HIV epidemic](#)

### Links:

[1] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/122>

[2] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/102>

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

[4] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/126>