

# CONTROLLING THE HIV EPIDEMIC WITH ANTIRETROVIRALS



Treatment as Prevention  
and Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis

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# Ethical Standards vis-à-vis Prevention in Biomedical Prevention Trials

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# Two Provisos

- Ethical argument needs to be based on best evidence.
  - Apologies, but I have not had the opportunity to review the clinical, public health and behavioural science evidence
  - This is therefore highly provisional and aims at opening up discussion only.
- Need to avoid HIV exceptionalism.



# Levels of Ethical Analysis in the Debate

- The clinical ethics of the healthcare worker/client relationship
- The public health ethics of policy/population intervention
- The ethics of STD prevention in the context of one's personal life and social situation.
- Research Ethics





# TasP

- The HIV+ individual starts Rx at a much higher CD4 count than usual now.
  - Possibly on diagnosis.
  - This reduces their transmission risk to near zero.



# Clinical Ethical questions about TasP

- Risk/benefit of the Rx
  - No additional clinical benefit to pt
  - Some additional clinical risk
- Behavioural and psychosocial impact on pt
  - Modifies psychological adjustment to Dx?
  - Modifies risk-behaviour?
  - Promotes testing in partners?
  - Impact on relationship/s?



# Public Health Ethical Questions about TasP

- Distributive justice
  - Price, availability across all global populations
    - Reduction of availability to poorest/most in need?
- Role in containing/reducing transmission in populations
- Behavioural impacts across whole populations



# PreP

- The HIV- person takes ARV to protect against infection
  - In serodiscordant long-term relationships
    - E.g. where conception is intended.
  - In (planned) high risk behaviour





# Clinical Ethical Questions in PreP

- Will ARV be available OTC or will it require prescription or pharmacy dispensing?
- Counselling about risk behaviour?
- “We have to treat people as they are, not as we think or wish they should be”.



# Public Health Ethical questions in PreP

- Cost effectiveness of PreP vis-à-vis behaviour change interventions
- Unintended consequences of wide availability of PreP vis-à-vis behaviour change
  - Both interventions to change behaviour
  - And the behaviour changes which might follow widespread PreP availability.



# Social and ethical questions

- As a person who is HIV+, what are my personal responsibilities regarding transmission risk?
  - Background: criminalisation of HIV transmission in some states
- As a person who is HIV-, what are my responsibilities?
- What are our responsibilities to each other in a world of TasP and PreP?
- Whose business is it anyway?
- “A pill for every ill”, or...?



# Research Ethics

- Not necessarily more complex than the ethics of any other prevention trial.
- Equipoise vis-à-vis other methods of prevention
- A plea for trial as a public health measure, not a biomedical treatment
  - Behavioural impact, sociocultural meaning



Thank you – over to you

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