HIV and accuracy in the South African media

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International AIDS Conference
Toronto
13 August 2006
Viewing this slide show

- This slide show is available on www.aidstruth.org
- View Notes to see explanations of slides.
Moral but inaccurate

- Opinion editorials have, correctly, been critical of state response (with important exceptions)
- Scientific accuracy of reports is very poor (with important exceptions)
Miscommunication of key scientific findings

- **Examples**
  - *SAPA* on EuroSIDA
  - *Independent on Saturday* on Atripla
- **Well intentioned**
- **Consequence of poor scientific training and low prioritisation by editors**
Critical Omissions

- IOM finding on HIVNET 012 all but ignored
- Consequence of poor HIV knowledge of journalists and editors
Rectifying poor scientific knowledge in media

- Editors must prioritise training
- Need at least one journalist trained as HIV expert on staff
- NGOs need to do more media training
- **BUT:**
  No political leadership = No prioritisation
Pseudo-science

- **Examples:**
  - Malan on AIDS statistics in *Noseweek*
  - Mhlongo & Rasnick on heterosexual transmission in *The Citizen*
  - Modise continuously on SAFM and 702
  - Chriselda on Khaya FM.

- **Radio:**
  - *Biggest problem.*
  - *most popular media in the country.*
Why?

- Newspaper editors with pseudo-scientific views give space
  - Martin Welz at Noseweek
  - The Citizen's editor
- Radio presenters do their own thing
- Lack of editorial knowledge
  - E.g. Cameron v. Bhengu article in popular magazine
What to do

- Pseudo-science in the media is a failure of ethics, not just lack of knowledge.

- Compare denialism on:
  - AIDS
  - Global Warming
  - Evolution/Natural Selection
  - Jewish Holocaust in WWII
Role of the media in science

- Explain scientific findings to public. E.g.
  - How we know that HIV causes AIDS
  - How we know that Global Warming is real
  - How we know Natural Selection is a fact
- Report fraud or poor ethics. E.g.
  - NYT on *JAMA* and *Neuropsychopharmacology*
  - Hwang Woo-Suk scandal
  - Vioxx
  - *Health-e* on Rath
A new ethic? Or does it bring new dangers?

- It is really the role of the media to challenge scientific consensus?
- Does the media have the expertise to challenge scientific consensus?
Stop AIDS Denialism

- AIDS denialism kills.
- Go to www.aidstruth.org to learn more.