

HIV and accuracy in the South African media

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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.