

Just elimination

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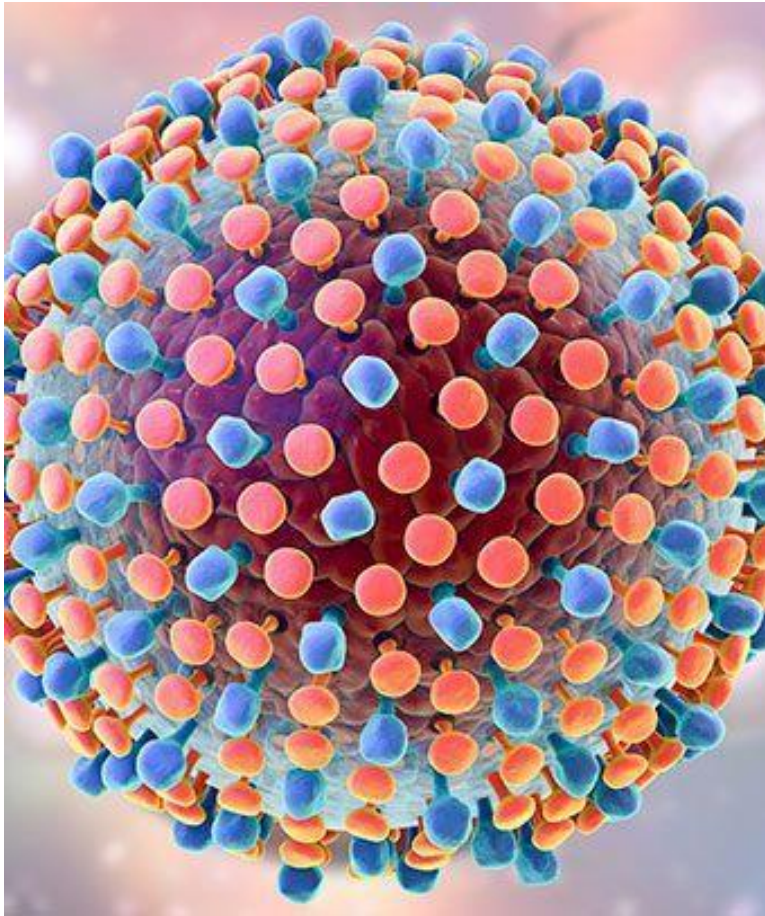




Disclosure statement

I have no interests to declare.

Eliminating hep C



- We are being asked to imagine a world without hepatitis C.
- There is no doubt that DAAs have changed the lives of many.
- Nevertheless, there is a need for some caution:
 - people who use drugs, have a history of drug use and are affected by hepatitis C experience stigma, discrimination and human rights violations.
- We need to consider these issues in our work.

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Project #1: Human rights and drug policy (ARC FT200100099)

Chief Investigators

- Prof Kate Seear, Deakin University

Research Team

- Dr Sean Mulcahy, La Trobe University
- Dr Alejandra Zuluaga Duque, La Trobe University and Deakin University

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Project advisory board

- Susan Boyd, Distinguished Professor of Human Rights and Social Development, University of Victoria
- Judy Chang, Former Executive Director, International Network of People who Use Drugs
- Sione Crawford, Chief Executive Officer, Harm Reduction Victoria
- Patrick Emerton, Professor of Law, Deakin University
- Suzanne Fraser, Adjunct Professor, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University
- Sarah Joseph, Professor of Human Rights Law, Griffith University
- Donald MacPherson, Director, Canadian Drug Policy Coalition
- Dr Annie Madden AO, Executive Director, Harm Reduction Australia

Project #2: Hepatitis C and 'post-cure' life (ARC DP200100941)

Chief Investigators

- Prof Kate Seear, Deakin University
- Prof Suzanne Fraser, La Trobe University and UNSW
- Prof kylie valentine, UNSW
- Dr Adrian Farrugia, La Trobe University

Research Team

- Emily Lenton, La Trobe University
- Dr Dion Kagan, UNSW
- Dr Sean Mulcahy, La Trobe University



Project advisory board



- Sione Crawford, CEO, Harm Reduction Victoria
- Pam Wood, person with lived experience
- Carrie Fowlie, CEO, Hepatitis Australia
- Professor Aunty Kerrie Doyle, Associate Dean, Indigenous Health, School of Medicine, Western Sydney University
- Robert Kemp, Principal Policy Advisor Hepatitis C, Queensland Health
- Elizabeth Birbilis, Senior Policy Officer, Sexual Health and Viral Hepatitis, Victorian Department of Health and Human Services
- Bianca Prain, Manager Hepatitis Programs, BBV and STI Unit, New South Wales Ministry of Health
- Paul Kidd, Senior Lawyer, Victoria Legal Aid, and Supervisory Board Member, HIV Social Justice
- Fiona Patten, Leader of Reason Party
- Alvin Lee, Principal Epidemiologist, Blood-Borne Viruses and Sexually Transmissible Infections, Victorian Department of Health and Human Services
- Nasra Higgins, Senior Epidemiologist, Victorian Department of Health and Human Services

Project #3: Narcotech: A data justice approach to drug-related stigma

Chief Investigators

- Prof Kate Seear, Deakin University
- Prof kylie valentine, UNSW
- Dr Thao Phan, ANU
- Emily Lenton, La Trobe University
- Dr Alejandra Zuluaga Duque, La Trobe University and Deakin University

► Novel ideas, methods and technologies

- Surveillance of populations, predictions of risk and other biomedical techniques for addressing healthcare are increasingly commonplace (Clarke et al. 2003);
- The use of these methods carries unique opportunities and risks in our field.
- Stigma, discrimination, criminalisation, rights violations.

Clarke, A., Shim, J., Mamo, L., Fosket, J., and Fishman, J. (2003). Biomedicalization: Technoscientific Transformations of Health, Illness, and U.S. Biomedicine; *American Sociological Review*, 68(2): 161-194.

Novel ideas, methods and technologies

- What do such methods mean for stigma?
- What might they feel like to those who are 'hidden', or who may wish to remain 'hidden'?
- In interviews we have undertaken, we have heard of the urgent need to:
 - Explore these questions;
 - Think through benefits and risks
 - Consider what it means to unmask drug use

► Novel methods and ‘problematism’

- Policy processes do not simply involve the identification and resolution of pre-existing ‘problems’;
- Policymakers give shape to problems as they go, including through:
 - Assumptions about what constitutes a ‘problem’ worthy of action;
 - Whether problems can be solved;
 - How to solve them.
- No field of policymaking is immune to these ‘problematism’ dynamics.

Bacchi, C. (2009). *Analysing Policy: What is the Problem Represented To Be?* Sydney:

¹¹ Pearson.

► Novel methods and ‘narcotechsolutionism’

- Technosolutionism – the idea that problems can be solved through technological shortcuts or fixes
- Narcotechsolutionism – the designation of various problems including stigma, discrimination and the invisibility of drug use as ‘drug-related problems’, which are then treated as solvable through technologies.

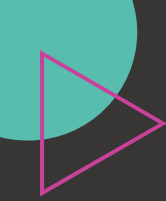
See also:

Seear, K. (2024) Shifting solutions: tracking transformations of drugs, health and the ‘human’ through human rights processes in Australia, *Health Sociology Review*, 33:3, 257-272.

► Novel methods and human rights

- Some argue that novel methods and new ideas are solely needed, including as a means to advance people's human rights (e.g. to health and life)
- Australia's human rights frameworks require more nuance than this, however
- Might measures limit people's rights?
- Can any limitations be justified? This includes consideration of several legal issues including whether there are any less restrictive/intrusive means available to achieve the stated goals.

See also: Seear, K. and Mulcahy, S. (2025). *Human rights and drug policy: Summary report of project findings and recommendations.*



Thank you

