

Community HIV elimination narratives in health promotion materials

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Background:

The UNAIDS led goal to ‘end’ HIV/AIDS has permeated domestic policy objectives of both government and community actors in Australia. This paper examines how ideas of community have been constituted and mobilised by HIV prevention and health promotion organisations within the context of Australia’s goal to virtually eliminate HIV transmission by 2030. Engaging with Nikolas Rose’s (1996) claim that community operates as a technology of government, we explore how community and responsibility have been imagined in the era of ‘elimination’.

Methods:

We mapped and analysed HIV pre materials produced by Australian HIV prevention and health promotion organisations between 2014–2026. Analysis focused on how these materials constituted ideas of community and responsibility.

Results:

In the context of Australia’s virtual elimination goals, HIV prevention campaigns, such as ACON’s *Ending HIV* campaign, produce evolving ideas of community which constitute HIV prevention as a collective and achievable project. Our analysis revealed a diverse and inclusive configuration of who is being imagined as the responsible subjects of prevention, reflecting epidemiological, political and biomedical imperatives. Examples include increasingly diverse visual representations featuring people of different genders, races and body types, as well as producing categories of subjects in relation to their consumption of antiretrovirals (e.g. someone who is on ARV; a PrEP user).

Conclusion:

While biomedical technologies are frequently foregrounded as enabling the possibility of elimination, they have not displaced the centrality of community as a technology of the Australian HIV response. Community continues to be operationalised as a key technology of what Rose and colleague Peter Miller call ‘government at a distance’, aligning individual conduct with national elimination goals. These findings highlight the ongoing work performed by notions of community within Australia’s HIV response, even as the terms of community and the responsibilities it entails are redefined in the era of biomedical elimination.

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