



# Stigma, Equity and Choice:

Decision-making in the context of infant feeding by HIV-positive Mothers

# Working on the fringes of the NSW HIV Narrative:

## MHAHS

working with individuals and communities from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds

- Since 1991
- State-wide
- Cultural Support Workers (25 languages)
- Health Promotion & Community Development with CALD communities
- Multilingual website

[www.mhahs.org.au](http://www.mhahs.org.au)



## POZHET

Working with heterosexual individuals and communities

- Since 1995
- State-wide
- Help Line
- Peer Support
- Annual workshops
- Annual Retreats
- Facebook community (private)
- Health Promotion

[www.pozhets.org.au](http://www.pozhets.org.au)



# the benefits of breast feeding:

## Australian National Breastfeeding Strategy 2019 and beyond



**“Sturdy brain architecture”**

**“Fine tuned for  
life..... Health  
imprinting”**

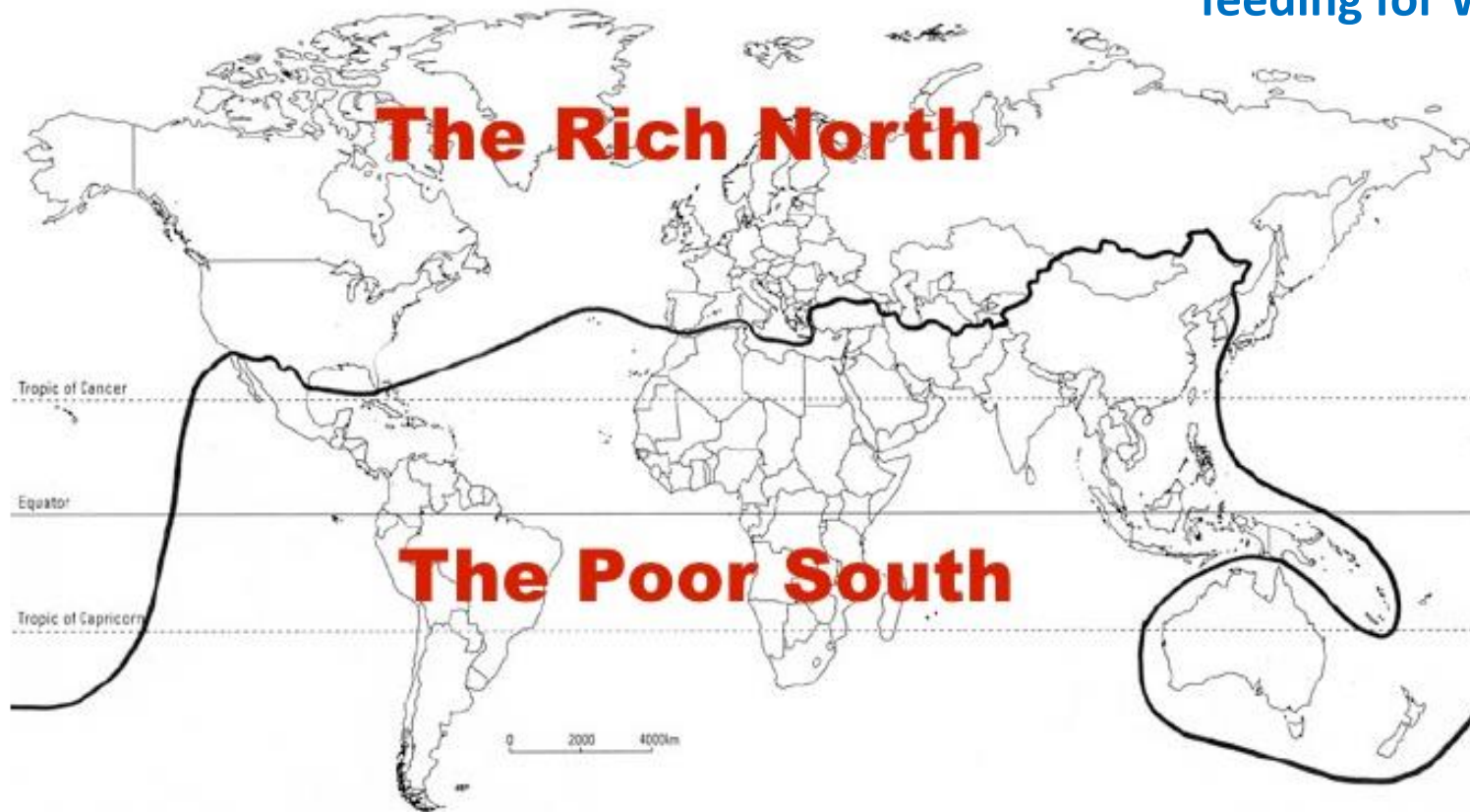
**“Prevent illness”**

**“reduces packaging,  
waste and transport  
costs”**

**“A skilled workforce, a  
more productive  
society”**

# For Women Living With HIV...

Global North  
discourages breast  
feeding for WLHIV



Global South  
encourages breast  
feeding for WLHIV

**JULIA**

LIZ

# Common experiences for WLHIV

- Invisibility
- Otherness
- Contradictory advice and experience
- Fear of disclosure
- Shame, Guilt
- Sense of failure
- “Not a real mother”
- Damned if you do, damned if you don’t

# New evidence?

UNDETECTABLE = UNTRANSMITTABLE



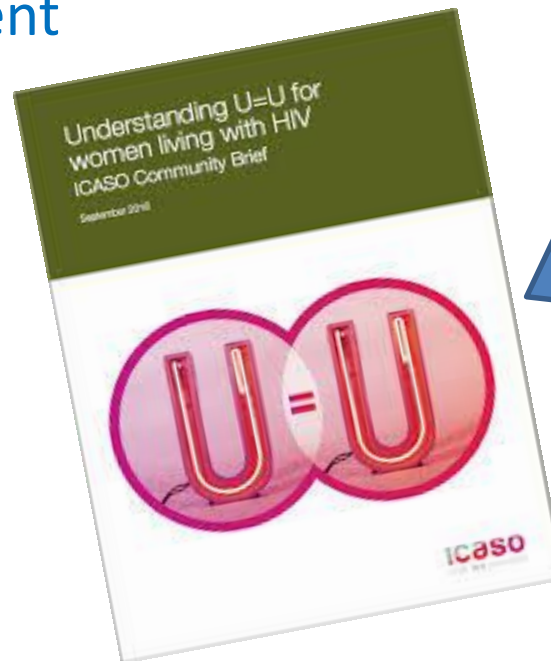
**A study using ART or infant prophylaxis (PROMISE study) found risk of transmission approx. 0.3% at 6 months after birth and 0.7% at 12 months after birth**

*TE Taha et al. Comparing maternal triple antiretrovirals and infant nevirapine prophylaxis for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV during breastfeeding. Oral presentation at the 8th International Workshop on HIV Pediatrics and poster presentation at the 21st International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2016) Durban, South Africa.*



# The way forward:

- understanding what women need
  - current and accessible information
  - informed decision making
- Holistic
- Client-led
- Person-centred
- Culturally competent
- Trauma-informed
- Partnership model



**“Women living with HIV have the right to self-determination and the power over their own bodies and the support to make informed decision in regard to infant feeding”**



# Contact details

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