

Opening Session

## What Works to Reduce HIV-Related Stigma and Discrimination and How This Can Apply to COVID-19



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# What Works to Reduce HIV- Related Stigma and Discrimination and How This Can Apply to COVID-19

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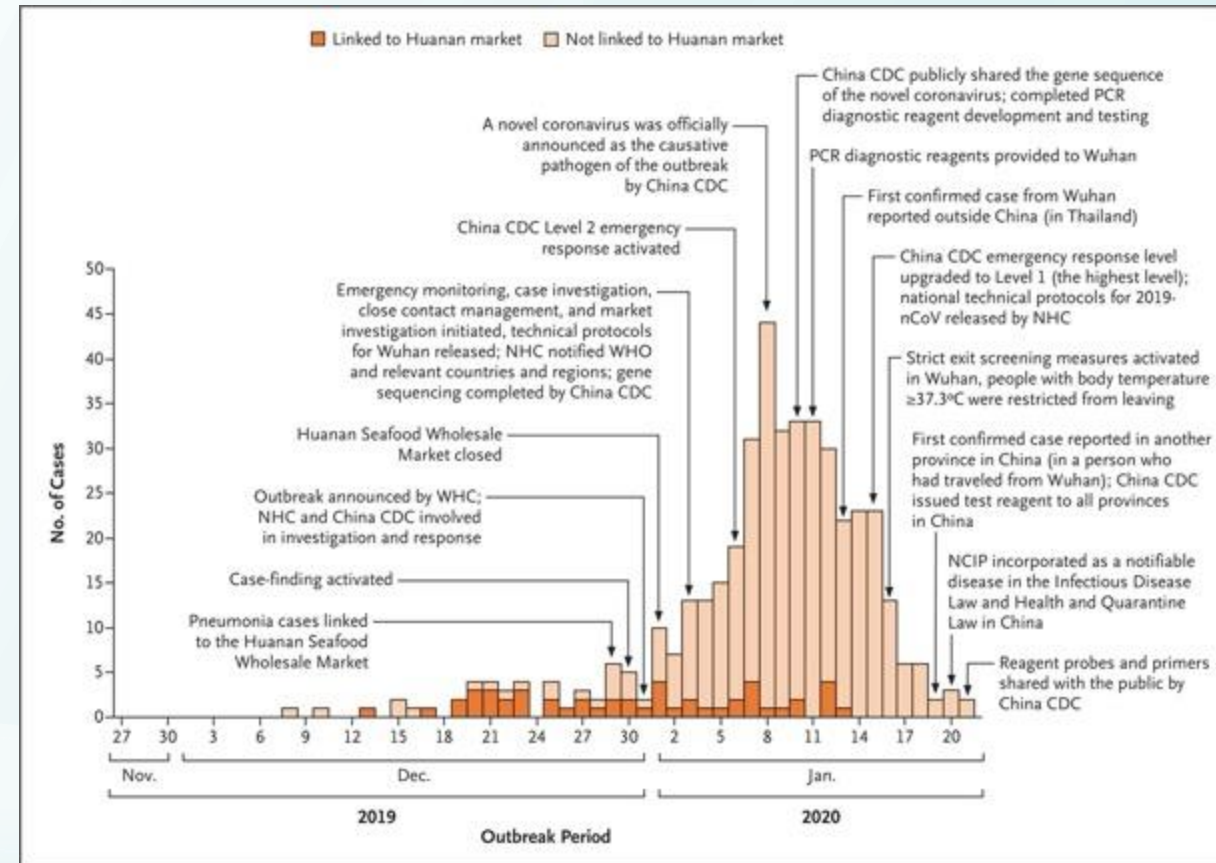
The George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health

# Outline

- COVID-19 Overview and Response
- COVID-19 stigma and discrimination
- Synergies between COVID-19 and HIV
- HIV-related stigma and discrimination
- HIV lessons learned for COVID-19

# Identification and Evolution of COVID-19 Pandemic

- **December 2019:** A pneumonia of unknown origin was detected in Wuhan, China
- **January 2020:** WHO declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern
- **February 2020:** New coronavirus disease identified as COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2)
- **March 2020:** WHO declared a Global Pandemic
- **November 2020:** More than 50 million cases of COVID-19 reported globally



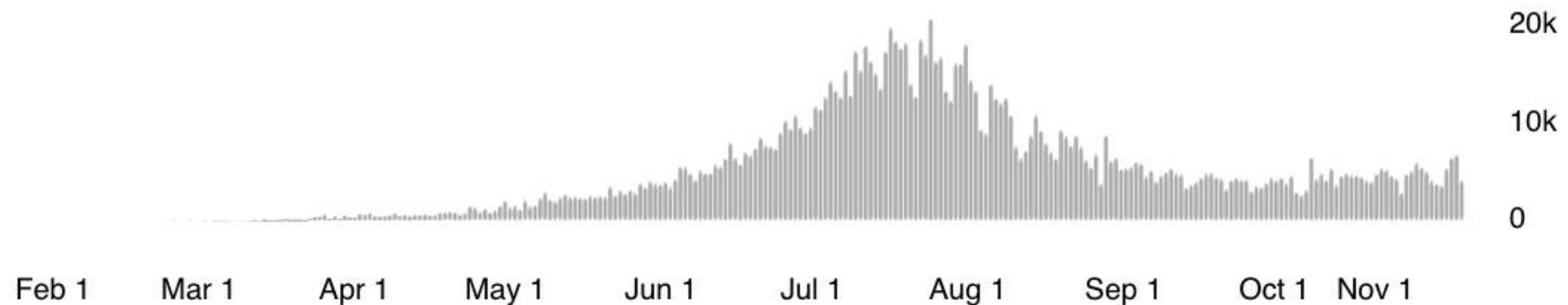
Source: N Engl J Med 2020; 382:1199-1207  
DOI: 10.1056/NEJMoa2001316



# Global Distribution of COVID-19

## Africa

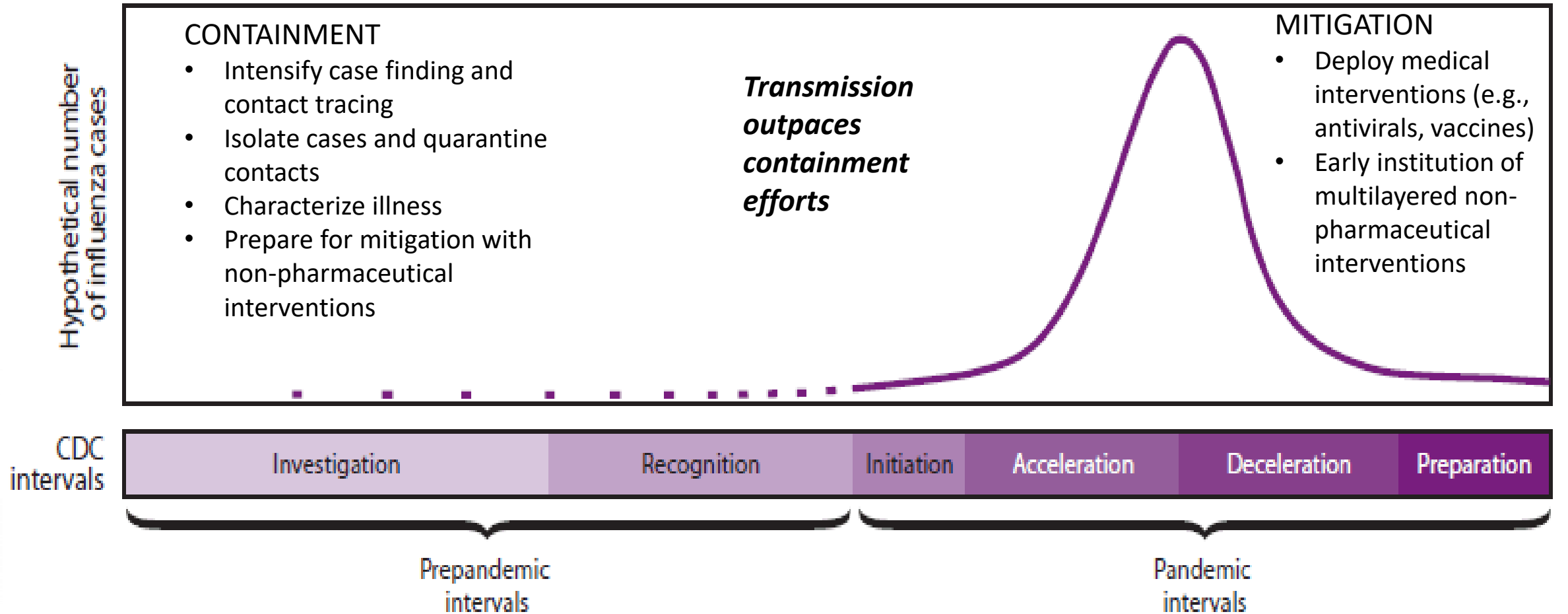
**1,357,945**  
confirmed cases



Source: World Health Organization

 Data may be incomplete for the current day or week.

# Response: Containment, Contact Tracing and Mitigation



# COVID-19 Stigma and Discrimination

# COVID-19 Response Efforts and their Consequences

- Restricted air travel/Closing of borders
- Quarantine/Stay-at-home orders issued/  
Social distancing
- Closure of schools, universities and non-essential services
- Establishment of surveillance systems and contact tracing
- COVID-19 testing expansion

- Xenophobia, racism, discrimination
- Social isolation, loneliness, disruptions in care, propagation of mis and disinformation
- Most vulnerable persons put on frontlines of pandemic for economic survival
- Reluctance to share information with health professionals, stigmatization
- Unequal health care access and testing access



# COVID-19 Stigma

- Why COVID-19 causes stigma
  - New disease
  - Fear of the unknown
  - Association of that fear with “others”
- Results in social stigma, othering, labeling, stereotyping
- Intersects with racism, agism, culture, sex, sexual orientation, health status, poverty, and other structural factors
- Results in barriers to testing, less health seeking behaviors and poor health outcomes including mental health

Source: [https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/a-guide-to-preventing-and-addressing-social-stigma-associated-with-covid-19?gclid=Cj0KCQiAy579BRCPARIsAB6QolbiRR9e5i9wT2Wh3JLB6OIH94F3dliybCKzxSk8UxhzBkoXx-pu-KsaAhS7EALw\\_wcB](https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/a-guide-to-preventing-and-addressing-social-stigma-associated-with-covid-19?gclid=Cj0KCQiAy579BRCPARIsAB6QolbiRR9e5i9wT2Wh3JLB6OIH94F3dliybCKzxSk8UxhzBkoXx-pu-KsaAhS7EALw_wcB); Logie et al. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7197953/>, JIAS, 2020

# Synergies between COVID-19 and HIV

# Synergies between HIV and COVID-19

## Maintaining HIV care during the COVID-19 pandemic

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has spread rapidly around the world since the first reports from Wuhan in China in December, 2019, and the outbreak was characterised as a pandemic by WHO on March 12, 2020.<sup>1</sup> Approximately 37.9 million people living with HIV<sup>2</sup> are at risk of infection with severe acute respiratory

only could undergo physical health deterioration but also might suffer great psychological pressure.

In response to these challenges, WHO, UNAIDS, and the Global Network of People Living With HIV are working together to ensure continued provision of HIV prevention, testing, and treatment services.<sup>6-8</sup>



Lancet HIV 2020

Published Online  
April 6, 2020  
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-3018\(20\)30105-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-3018(20)30105-3)

AIDS and Behavior  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10461-020-02871-9>

### NOTES FROM THE FIELD

## The Burden of COVID-19 in People Living with HIV: A Syndemic Perspective

Stephanie Shiau<sup>1</sup> · Kristen D. Krause<sup>2,3</sup> · Pamela Valera<sup>4</sup> · Shobha Swaminathan<sup>5,6</sup> · Perry N. Halkitis<sup>1,2,4</sup>

## When pandemics collide

One pandemic virus has been a major topic in global health for almost 40 years, the other was discovered just 4 months ago, but, as SARS-CoV-2 infections have now been reported in most African countries, HIV and COVID-19 are on a collision course. Although we have learned a remarkable amount about SARS-CoV-2 in a short time, its potential impact on people living with

At the time of writing, sub-Saharan Africa has reported relatively few cases: several thousand in South Africa and just tens or hundreds in other countries. However, these numbers are probably substantial underestimates owing to limited testing capacity. A unifying factor of the countries that have managed to suppress SARS-CoV-2 outbreaks rapidly is large scale testing and contact



Lancet HIV 2020

Published Online  
April 24, 2020  
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-3018\(20\)30113-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-3018(20)30113-2)  
See Online/Comment  
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-3018\(20\)30105-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-3018(20)30105-3)  
See Online/Feature

AIDS and Behavior  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10461-020-02856-8>

### NOTES FROM THE FIELD

## How Do We Balance Tensions Between COVID-19 Public Health Responses and Stigma Mitigation? Learning from HIV Research

Carmen H. Logie<sup>1,2</sup> · Janet M. Turan<sup>3</sup>

## African Journal of AIDS Research

### EDITORIAL: Managing the march of COVID-19: lessons from the HIV and AIDS epidemic

Alan Whiteside<sup>1</sup> , Warren Parker<sup>2</sup>  and Mike Schramm<sup>3</sup> 

<sup>1</sup>Global Health Policy, Balsillie School of International Affairs, Waterloo, Canada

<sup>2</sup>Independent public health and communication specialist, San Diego, USA

<sup>3</sup>NISC (Pty) Ltd, Makhanda, South Africa

## Three lessons for the COVID-19 response from pandemic HIV



The HIV pandemic provides lessons for the response to the novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic: no vaccine is available for either and there are no licensed pharmaceuticals for COVID-19, just as there

of less well-off people died because of inequitable access to life-saving antiretrovirals, and the same trend might occur with COVID-19.<sup>7</sup> Global policy must prioritise access to innovations for those individuals in greatest need.

Lancet HIV 2020  
Published Online  
April 13, 2020  
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-3018\(20\)30110-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2352-3018(20)30110-7)

# COVID-19 and PLWH

## WHO Interim Guidance

### Q&A on COVID-19, HIV and antiretrovirals

24 March 2020 | Q&A

Are people living with HIV at increased risk of being infected with the virus that causes COVID-19? (+)

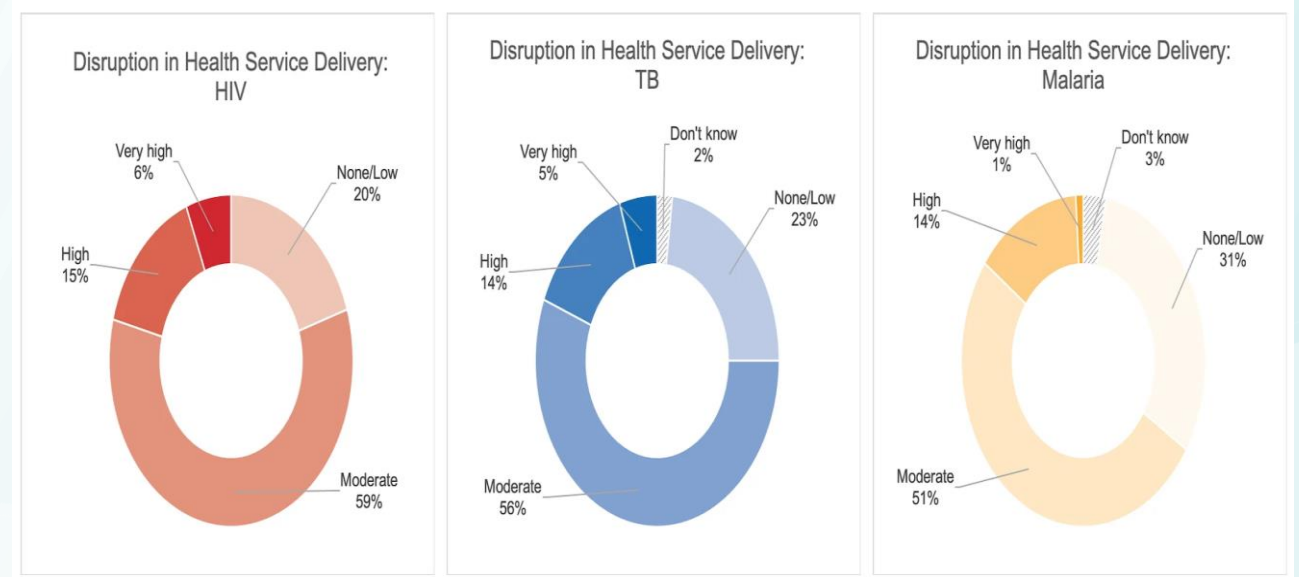
Can antiretrovirals be used to treat COVID-19? (+)

Can antiretrovirals be used to prevent COVID-19 infection? (+)

What studies on treatment and prevention of COVID-19 with antiretrovirals are being planned? (+)

What is WHO's position on the use of antiretrovirals for the treatment of COVID-19? (+)

## Impact on the Care Continuum



Source: <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-on-covid-19-hiv-and-antiretrovirals>; <https://www.theglobalfight.org/covid-aids-tb-malaria/>

# Characteristics of COVID-19 vs. HIV

Virus	HIV	SARS CoV-2
Type of Virus	Retrovirus	Coronavirus
Disease	AIDS	COVID-19
Animal Host	Non-human Primates	Possibly Bats
Year First Reported	1981	2019
Global Infections	75 million (1981-2018, 37 years)	50 million ( 10 months)
Global Deaths	32 million (1981-2018, 37 years)	1.25 million (10 months)
Mortality Rate	Very high if untreated	About 5% of reported cases
Countries with Most Cases	South Africa, Nigeria, India	US, Brazil, Russia, India
Primary Modes of Transmission	Sexual, Parenteral, Perinatal	Respiratory
Incubation Period	Years	Days
Testing	PCR, Serology	PCR, Serology
Typical Acute Clinical Symptoms	Asymptomatic or Acute Retroviral Syndrome (ARS)	Fever, Cough, Dyspnea
Examples of Disease Manifestations	Opportunistic Illnesses and Malignancies	Pulmonary, Renal, Cardiac
Treatment	Highly effective antiretrovirals	Partially effective antivirals, steroids
Prevention	Testing, contact tracing, PrEP, PEP, ARVs, safe sex, safe injection and transfusion practices	Testing, social distancing, masks, hand hygiene, contact tracing, isolation, quarantine
Vaccine	No	No

# COVID-19 and HIV: Similarities in Response

- Essential role of testing and diagnostics
- Implementation of surveillance systems and use of contact tracing
- Development of therapeutics and vaccines
- Addressing the social and economic consequences
- Fighting fear, stigma, and criminalization

Sources: Logie & Turan; Whiteside et al; Shiao; Relf et al

AIDS and Behavior

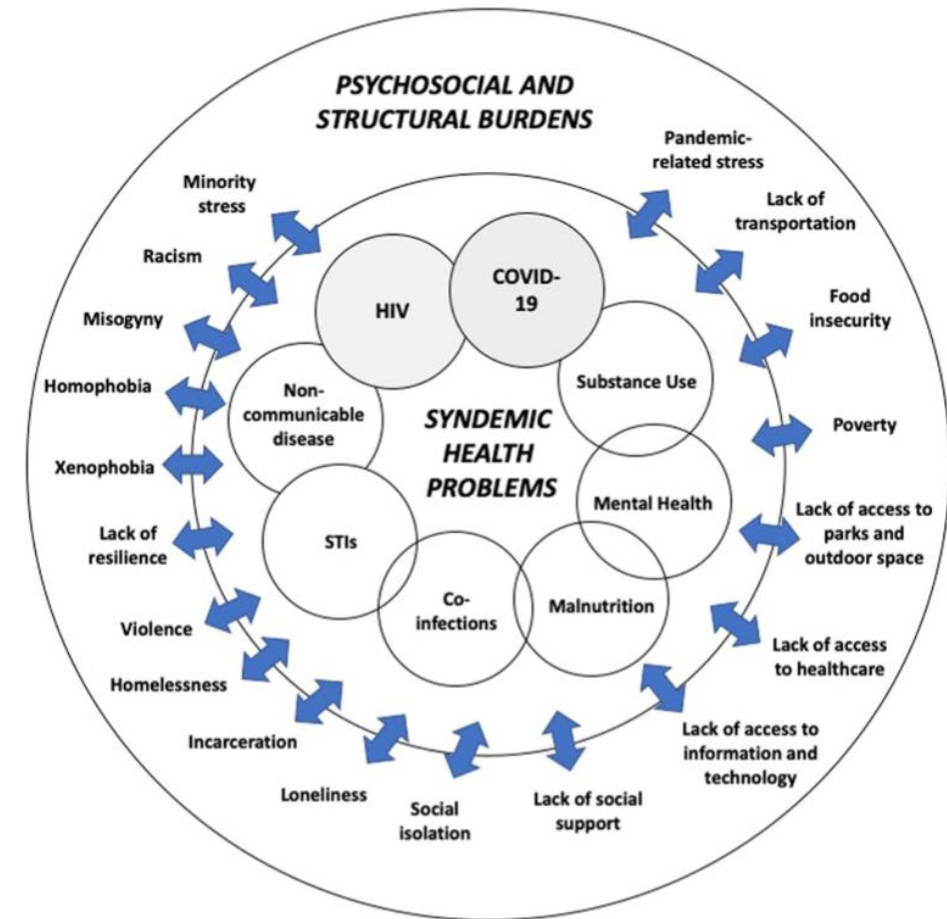


Fig. 1 A syndemic conceptualization of HIV & COVID-19 co-infection in people living with HIV





# The Era of Discovery and Misinformation and Disinformation

Bananas as good as  
drugs for  
HIV, say

Prof. D.Sc. J. Seg  
**AID**  
USA—home mad  
NOT imported fr



John Yiamouyiannis, Ph. D.



# HIV and COVID-19 Related Stigma and Discrimination

- Novelty of viruses
- Naming
  - Gay-Related Immune Deficiency (GRID) –a plague among “at risk” populations in the US
  - The “4-H’s” (haemophiliacs, heroin users, homosexuals, Haitians)
  - “Chinese” and “Wuhan” virus
  - Labelling of “superspreaders”
- Criminalization and legal action taken against people who
  - Transmit HIV to others
  - Are not following public health measures and put others at risk for COVID-19

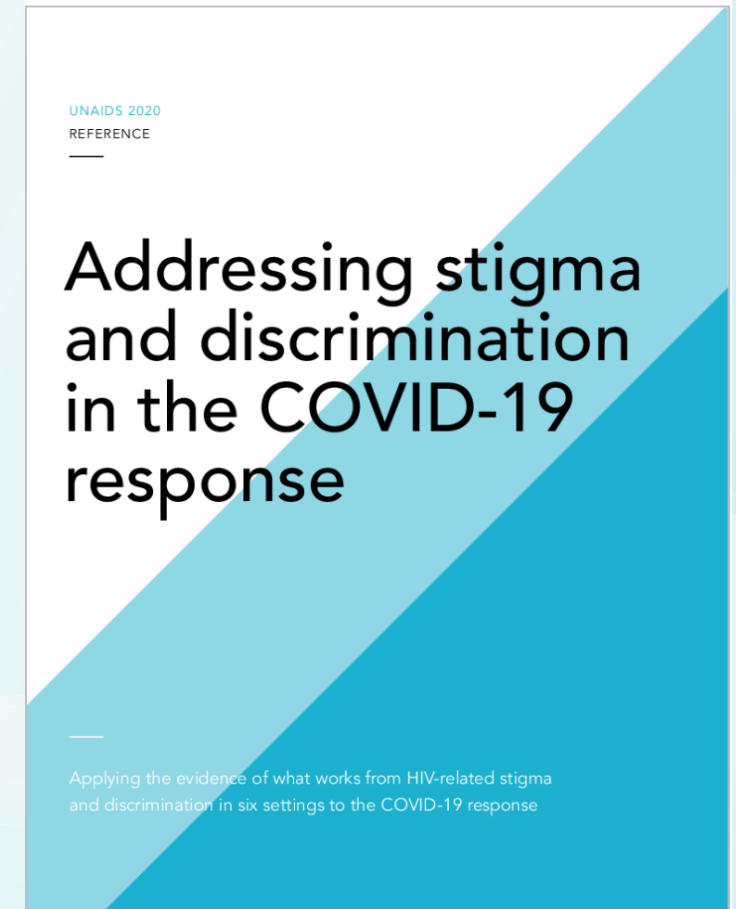
Source: Logie et al. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7197953/>, JIAS, 2020



# HIV Lessons Learned for COVID-19

# Evidence-based Approaches based on HIV Experiences (UNAIDS)

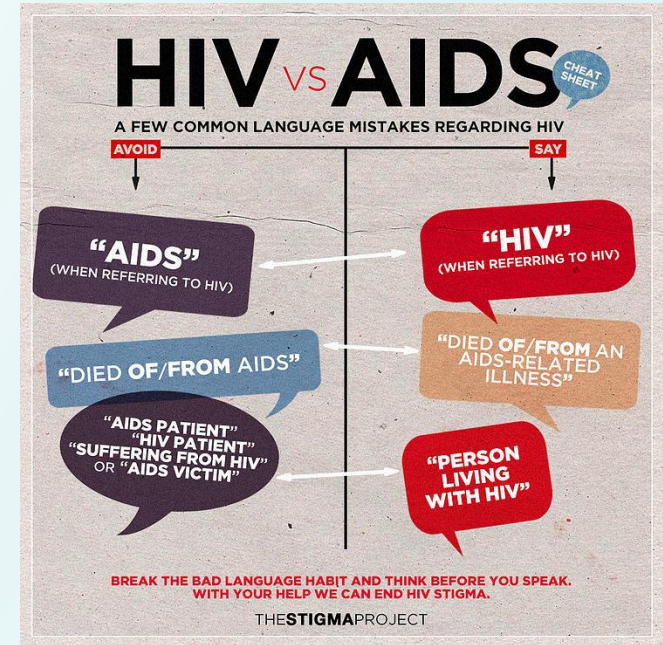
1. Community settings, including individuals, families and communities
2. Workplace settings
3. Educational settings
4. Healthcare settings
5. Justice settings
6. Emergency/humanitarian settings



Source: [https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media\\_asset/covid19-stigma-brief\\_en.pdf](https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/covid19-stigma-brief_en.pdf)

# Additional Potential Solutions

- Community engagement
- Key Opinion Leaders
- Social influencers
- Use of intentional language
- Interrupt spread of mis- and disinformation
- Using recovered patients as voices



# Conclusions

- Coronavirus pandemic is an evolving situation with unprecedented global impact but disproportionate impact on certain populations
- The unknowns and uncertainty given novelty of the virus has led to stigma and discrimination similar to that observed with HIV
- Must capitalize on knowledge from prior pandemics and epidemics to address racial disparities, stigma, and discrimination
- HIV epidemic provides many examples of how to confront and reduce stigma and discrimination with COVID-19 and other infectious diseases