A Human Right-Based Approach to Health for People Living with HIV and People Who Inject Drugs

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HIV/AIDS has a significant impact on the lives of individuals due to denial, and violation of their rights. People living with HIV/AIDS (PLHA) face specific health problems, particularly People Who Inject Drugs (PWID) because there are often laws that criminalize PWID. PLHA and PWID often do not have access to HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment services; which violates their right to health. PWID are a targeted population who are even more vulnerable due to discrimination and social stigma. A human rights- based approach (HRBA) to HIV/AIDS prevention includes a focus on the reduction of social stigma, discrimination and active participation of PWID in their own healthcare decisions. There are certain areas of the essential principles of HRBA, which are missing; even in a well-executed health approach. Given that health is a fundamental human right, states are obligated to implement a HRBA to health through respect, protection and fulfillment. Using human rights indicators, we can determine where more effort is needed to prevent and help those living with HIV/AIDS and PWID. New indicators need to be developed in order to have human rights oriented HIV/AIDS indicators for PWID; so that they can assist in determining the steps being taken by States to exercise their obligations.