A Human Right-Based Approach to Health for People Who Inject Drugs

Wednesday, 16 November 2016
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Rm 723, 7/F, Faculty of Law, Cheng Yu Tung Tower, Centennial Campus, HKU

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. A rights-based approach to health for PWID should incorporate multiple human rights principles including: Non-discrimination; Privacy and confidentiality; Availability of services; Accessibility of services; Acceptability of services; Quality of services; Participation in health policy and service decision-making; Informed decision-making about one’s own health; and Transparency and accountability.

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.

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SPEAKER
Professor Kamiar Alaei

Kamiar Alaei, MD, MPH, MS, DrPH, MSt, serves as the University at Albany’s associate Dean for Global and Interdisciplinary Research. He has authored and co-authored several peer-reviewed journal articles in prestigious journals and he has been featured or interviewed by major academic journals such as Nature, Science and the Lancet.

Dr. Alaei earned his Medical Doctorate (MD) from Isfahan Medical University, his Master of Public Health (MPH) in epidemiology from Tehran Medical University – two of the top universities in Iran – his Master of Science in International Health from Harvard University with full scholarship, his second doctoral degree in Health Policy from SUNY, University at Albany, and his Master of Studies in International Human Rights Law with scholarship from University of Oxford. Among several awards, he was selected as one of the 21st century young leaders in Asia in 2008 and he received the Inaugural Elizabeth Taylor Award in 2012.

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