

# Continent: public health and HIV/AIDS in Africa in the 21st century.

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## Abstract

Approaches to the prevention and control of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa have been heavily based on early experiences and policies from industrialised countries, where the disease affects specific risk groups. HIV/AIDS has been dealt with differently from other sexually transmitted or lethal infectious diseases, despite being Africa's leading cause of death. In this review, we discuss the evolution of the global response to the epidemic, and the importance of redefining HIV/AIDS in Africa as a public health and infectious disease emergency. We discuss reconsideration of policies and practice around HIV testing and partner notification, and emphasise the need for an increased focus on treatment. Human-rights based approaches to HIV/AIDS prevention might have reduced the role of public health and social justice, which offer a more applied and practical framework for HIV/AIDS prevention and care in Africa's devastating epidemic.