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Message from Toronto - Deliver AIDS Treatment and Prevention

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The XVI International AIDS Conference took place in Toronto in August 2006. It examined the global situation concerning HIV especially in low-income countries. The WHO's goal has not been reached: 25% of infected people still do not have access to medication in some countries.

Although HIV treatment has become simpler (one pill a day), and the creation of generics has lowered its cost, the average price for this therapy remains high and the access to it poor.

HIV infected people also have to face discrimination, which should be an issue for the future. To

improve the situation, as Bill Gates argued, the organisation should expand both treatment access and prevention. But some factors go against this aim: bad health systems and lack of medical workers who have left their countries because of the difficulty of working in such bad systems.

Prevention by vaccination is not possible yet, and most people at risk being infected or transmitting the disease do not have access to condoms, HIV testing or even to therapeutic ways of preventing mother-to-child transmission which exist in wealthier countries.

Ways to increase prevention are on trial. Microbicides could be provided, anti-herpetic treatments could lower the risk of HIV transmission, male circumcision seems to reduce the risk, but the organisations lack recommendations.

Finally, pre-exposure prophylaxis exists but it might select resistant viruses and it seems difficult to implement.

These trials agree to provide therapy to people infected during the study but questions remain concerning the long term management of the disease.

Despite all these difficulties the WHO has a new aim: providing universal access to HIV therapy and prevention by 2010.

269 words