

There is no medical definition for being cured of HIV, says Prof Karim

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Image: Drew Hays on Unsplash

A healthcare worker with an HIV test

The Director of the Centre for the Aids Programme of Research in South Africa, Professor Salim Abdool Karim says there is no medical definition for being cured of HIV.

A debate was sparked on the issue following a report by the Journal Nature Medicine which revealed that [a 53-year-old man in Germany, often referred to as the Berlin patient](#), has become the latest person to be cured of HIV after receiving a stem cell transplant.

The patient ceased antiretroviral therapy for HIV in 2018. Professor Karim says a more practical definition is used in the matter. "We use a more practical definition that is something that we refer to as functionally cured. In other words every attempt we make to try and find the virus in a person, we can't find it. We look for it for at least three years and after three years if we can't find it, we say the person is cured. We don't know it might still be hiding, somewhere dormant and may pitch up several years later. But functionally cured is a good way to move forward," says Karim.

VIDEO: Professor Salim Abdool Karim speaks about possible HIV cure using stem cell transplant: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CnhZxwjmGm0&t=1s>