

Prof Karim warns of possible resurgence of HIV-AIDS infections in SA

9 February 2022, 11:30 AM | SABC | @SABCNews



Image: Reuters

A red ribbon is put on the sleeves of a man by his friend to show support for people living with HIV during a program to raise awareness about AIDS on World AIDS Day.

Epidemiologist, Professor Salim Abdool Karim, has warned of a possible resurgence of HIV-AIDS infections in the country because the fight against them is no longer the centre of attention in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic.

Medical experts say the experiences learned from the HIV epidemic can be applied to the fight against COVID-19. They say like in the AIDS response, governments should work with communities to find local solutions.

The medical experts say key populations that are living with HIV-AIDS must not bear the brunt of increased stigma and discrimination as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Karim says it is sad that the fight against HIV-AIDS has literally been abandoned. He says, "With HIV, we still are in a situation in which we have close to a million deaths in a year. And we have about one-and-a-half-million infections each year. I mean last year, the number was about 1 000 550 new infections. So, we've got to keep our eye on the ball, otherwise, if we drop it, we might find that we have an resurgence of HIV. Based on what we've done with HIV, we can now understand some of the variants that we look at with HIV."

Below is the full interview with Prof Karim on the discovery of a new variant of HIV in the Netherlands:

<https://omny.fm/shows/safm-sunrise-1/there-has-been-the-discovery-of-a-new-variant-of-h>

Progress

In December last year, Deputy President David Mabuza said despite challenges presented by COVID-19, South Africa has made progress in the fight against HIV and AIDS. He was speaking at the World AIDS Day commemoration event in Xikundu village outside Malamulele in Limpopo.

About 3.6 million people have died from HIV-related illnesses in South Africa since 1995. The country boasts the biggest Aids programme in the world.

Mabuza said the advent of COVID-19 has made the fight even harder.

“Despite the COVID-19 challenges, we remain committed to getting our country back on track according to the UN goal of eradicating Aids by 2030.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zrsEB9f16Dk>