

UN summit on non-communicable diseases should learn from global AIDS response

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As the world prepares to develop a global strategy to tackle some of the biggest current threats to human health, there is a lot to be learned from past successes and mistakes of the global response to HIV/AIDS.

The lessons learned and recommendations for developing a strategy to tackle non-communicable diseases, which include cancers, cardiovascular [disease](#), chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes, are contained in a new article in this week's [PLoS Medicine](#) by [global health](#) leaders who argue that improvements in advocacy and recognition of the NCD burden, greater attention to national planning and resource allocation, long term investments by donors, and a greater emphasis on strengthening health systems are all needed.

Rebecca Dirks from FHI 360 in Arlington, USA and colleagues say that: "The AIDS response has taught us that efforts to address a pandemic are incremental and can take time. We need to be both opportunistic and strategic to achieve an NCD response of significant magnitude. Unless the [pandemics](#) of NCDs are addressed now, the lives of those living in developing countries will be saved from communicable diseases only to be lost prematurely from [noncommunicable diseases](#)."

These recommendations are intended to inform the upcoming, unprecedented United Nations Summit on NCDs in mid-September 2011 that aims to agree on a global NCD strategy. This is only the second UN summit of its kind to focus on a global health issue, the first being HIV/AIDS in 2001, which led to the creation of the Global Fund

to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

More information: Lamptey P, Merson M, Piot P, Reddy KS, Dirks R (2011) Informing the 2011 UN Session on Noncommunicable Diseases: Applying Lessons from the AIDS Response. PLoS Med 8(9): e1001086. [doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.1001086](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1001086)

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