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TRANSCRIPT

World AIDS Day 2025

Hello and welcome. This is Dr. Roobhini Sri, Assistant Professor, Department of Microbiology, SMVMCH. Today, December 1, 2025 the World Health Organization calls for all communities to join hands to commemorate World AIDS Day 2025 under the theme, “Overcoming disruption, transforming the AIDS response.” This theme is a call for sustained political leadership, international cooperation, and human-rights-centred approaches to end AIDS by 2030.

Let’s begin with the basics. What is HIV, and what is AIDS? Human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV, is a virus that attacks the body’s immune system. Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, or AIDS, occurs at the most advanced stage of HIV infection. HIV targets the body’s white blood cells, weakening immunity and making it much easier to get sick with infections like tuberculosis and certain cancers. HIV spreads through body fluids such as blood, breast milk, semen, and vaginal fluids—it’s not transmitted through kissing, hugging, or sharing food. It can also be spread from a mother to her baby.

The good news is that HIV can be both prevented and treated with antiretroviral therapy (ART). Untreated HIV can progress to AIDS after many years. The WHO now defines advanced HIV disease as a CD4 cell count less than 200 cells/mm³ or a stage 3 or 4 event in adults and adolescents. Importantly, all children younger than 5 living with HIV are considered to have advanced disease, regardless of other findings.

So, where do we stand in 2025? According to WHO, “the HIV response stands at a crossroads. Life-saving services

are being disrupted, and many communities face heightened risks and vulnerabilities. Yet, hope endures in the determination, resilience, and innovation of communities striving to end AIDS.” The Government of India, is taking action—simplifying access to HIV prevention, testing, and treatment, strengthening management of drug resistance and advanced disease, and integrating these services within primary health care and strong community-based platforms.

Ending AIDS means addressing the inequalities driving the epidemic. Children, adolescent girls, and young women face unique risks. Protecting rights and ensuring everyone’s access to services is crucial for stopping new infections and achieving health equity.

Advances like long-acting lenacapavir—a six-monthly injection for prevention—show that progress continues. With commitment and creativity, lifesaving therapies can reach those in greatest need. When communities and self-help groups join forces with health workers, policymakers, and partners, new pathways to success emerge—built on trust, equity, and a shared purpose.

On this World AIDS Day, let’s recommit to overcome disruption and transform the AIDS response so that, together, we can end AIDS as a public health threat. Thank you for listening.

Thank you!!



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