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Shining a light on research & innovation.

## Winning the Long War Against AIDS

An interview with Professor Julio Montaner  
AIDS Researcher, University of British Columbia

### How has research led to HIV/AIDS treatment?

Research has been fundamental to our ability to conquer HIV and AIDS. We haven't got there yet, but truly we now have the tools to get there. And clearly more research will be needed to finish the job, but the reality is that when we started this work, we didn't know what hit us; we didn't know where it came from, and how we were going to get out of it. And it was only because we got ourselves organized to methodically ask the questions, get the answers, and invest on changing our standards of care based on those responses that today we can tell you for sure that we can control this epidemic.

So based on the work that we have done in British Columbia, of expanding antiretroviral therapy, basically making it available to every person infected with HIV, really we were bringing life saving strategies and not just the pills but the strategy – the whole package – to communities that traditionally had been underserved. Treatment not only decreases morbidity and mortality among people infected with HIV, but actually most people will stop transmitting, and this was revolutionary.

By 2006, we had a body of data that allowed us to formally make the call for treatment as prevention as a means to changing the course of the epidemic. By 2030, we should be able to decrease the burden of disease – morbidity, mortality, and transmission – by approximately 90% globally. Having the opportunity, the unique opportunity, over a lifetime to see the birth of an epidemic, which became a pandemic, and then transform it into a sporadic event globally.