

To have a baby who grows up in a country free of HIV/AIDS. But perhaps that will be for my grandchildren.”
 – Mduzuzi Sabath Nkosi, the first South African to be vaccinated in an HIV vaccine trial in Durban, South Africa.

This quote by South African, Mduzuzi Sabath Nkosi, for me, captured the essence of the challenge of developing a vaccine against HIV/AIDS – it is our dream for future generations but we aren’t exactly sure when this much-needed dream will come to fruition.

This second edition of the AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition (AVAC) *AIDS Vaccine Handbook* is the A to Z on AIDS vaccines – where we are in the quest, how we got there, and what are the challenges (on all levels) that remain. It is a distillation of all the different types of experiences acquired in nearly twenty years of work – from the very personal to the political to the scientific, and it emphasises the very real and difficult challenges that face this field.

We all know the goal, but achieving it is probably going to take every last bit of courage, determination, know-how and patience that we have. But the good news is, it has been done before and can probably be done again.

The book is a perfect vaccine primer – it tackles all the issues in clear, concise, easy-to-read, colloquial language which makes it totally accessible whatever your level of immersion in the topic – from complete beginner to people who think they have heard it all but are willing to still hear something new. And that’s the interesting part of this field – you have never really heard it all! One of my colleagues who has largely remained on the support side of activities and hasn’t really studied the topic in detail found it an excellent introduction to all the relevant issues while I found it a good catch up and reminder of everything we have learnt and continue to learn about vaccines.

Chapters range from the very basics of HIV and vaccine science, the immune system (all with useful graphics), the process of vaccine development from concept to product, the different approaches currently in development, the role of clades, testing vaccines in people including detailed steps on what exactly happens to people in vaccine trials (which will



Community preparedness is an integral part of HIV vaccine R&D – here SAAVI educators are seen in action in South Africa.

**Kahn P, ed. AIDS vaccine handbook.
 2nd edition: Global perspectives.**

New York: AVAC, 2005.

Reviewed by Michelle Rotchford Galloway



be useful for potential participants), safety, ethics, informed consent, community education and involvement, political leadership, CABs, investigator's experiences of running trials and participants' experiences of participating in trials in different countries. Literally, the good the bad and the ugly of what has happened to date across the world.

The authors and contributors read like a who's who of AIDS vaccine work across the globe and care has been taken to include voices from all the regions currently involved in vaccine work – stressing the truly international nature of the quest and the strengths and weaknesses of different countries and regions.

Chapters are short, yet comprehensive and complete. You can jump with ease from topic to topic or read the whole thing for an in-depth overview. It also contains useful contact information

of organisations working in the field, lists of ongoing trials and a detailed glossary.

Written with an overall powerful advocacy style and agenda – the handbook is an excellent and very accessible resource no matter your level of knowledge and interest.

Right from the start it's a good reminder of exactly why we are tackling this mammoth task.

“Consider this: Since AVAC published the first edition of this book just six years ago, 25 million more people have become infected with HIV, and almost 15 million have died ... Shocking, numbing, sobering – the tragic testament to an epidemic that rages on.” – Mitchell Warren, Executive Director AVAC.

It may not be for our children but a vaccine against AIDS is the most precious gift we can give to future generations.

Van Dyk A. *HIV/AIDS care and counselling* **— a multidisciplinary approach. Cape Town: Pearson Education, 2005.**

Reviewed by Michelle Rotchford Galloway

I am very privileged to receive review copies of publications on AIDS – some undoubted gems arrive on my desk and at this time of year it's a bit of a catch up to review them all in time for the last issue of the Bulletin.

This is another such gem. It is so detailed and so comprehensive that it's almost too much information for one reading, and it's certainly hard to do justice to in a short review. I know it's a reference publication I will return to (and return to) whenever I need useful information for writing articles and for information for my colleagues involved in AIDS educational endeavours. In fact, I suspect it will soon become a well-thumbed addition to our resource centre.

It contains the proverbial wealth of information in nearly 400, two-columned, small-type pages – comprehensive, up-to-date and well researched by the author. I marvel at the amount of work that went into it.

This is the 3rd edition and has been updated to include the latest information on antiretroviral therapy, tuberculosis co-infection, STIs, care for orphans and, very importantly, care for the caregivers.

It aims to provide information, knowledge and skills building (through activities) on all aspects of living with and caring for

people with HIV/AIDS and will be invaluable for professionals and lay people alike.

I hesitate to list content because of the sheer depth of the information and the injustice of leaving anything out but highlights include the detailed sections on counselling; infection control; care and nursing principles, and legal, ethical and policy issues. I found the very practical information incredibly useful – small things that impact profoundly on people's lives but that I haven't come across in other handbooks – for example, the fact that cats, although a source of emotional support, can be carriers of bacteria harmful to people with compromised immune systems and the steps one can take to avoid any problems. Simple, but important, information for day-to-day life.

The legal section is also particularly useful – written largely in question and answer style, and looking at questions that people will ask and need to know the answer to like 'Is it ever justifiable to test for HIV without the patient's consent?', 'Can a mentally ill person be tested or treated without his or her consent?' and 'Can a child with HIV be excluded from a school?'

It's an excellent body of work. I know this one will remain a useful resource for a long time to come for myself and my colleagues.

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