Getting HIV/AIDS Figures Right

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Researchers from the University of Washington's new Institute for Health Metrics & Evaluation are working with health officials to address inaccuracies in data reporting for a number of global health issues, including HIV/AIDS, *The Seattle Times* reports (seattletimes.nwsource.com, 4/9).

The researchers and health officials began a two-day meeting on April 9 at the Institute's first international board meeting and scientific conference in Seattle. The Institute was created in part by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Conference attendees included officials from the World Health Organization (WHO), the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Bank.

According to the article, difficulties in collecting accurate health data, especially in poorer countries with limited resources, contribute to the inaccuracy of some health statistics. Dr. Christopher Murray, the Institute's director, says that political biases and agendas can also play a role. "It's not a good setup to be charged with convincing people to give you money, spending the money, then evaluating how well you're doing," he said.

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