

Harvard Study: South African AIDS Denialism Resulted in 365,000 Deaths

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The South African government could have prevented 365,000 HIV/AIDS deaths, [The New York Times](#) reports. A study by Harvard University researchers estimates that providing antiretroviral drugs in general and drugs specifically to prevent mother-to-child transmission could have prevented those deaths.

The study concluded that the policies of former President Thabo Mbeki were to blame. After years of tension in the African National Congress, the party ousted Mbeki in September. The study has again raised questions about why Mbeki was so influenced by [AIDS denialists](#)—and why his political colleagues did not challenge him earlier.

One of the first acts of Kgalema Motlanthe, Mbeki's successor, was to replace Manto Tshabala-Msimang. She was Mbeki's health minister, who suggested beetroot, lemon juice and garlic as treatment. Barbara Hogan, the new health minister, has quickly reversed course.

"I feel ashamed that we have to own up to what Harvard is saying," said Hogan, who was incarcerated for a decade during apartheid. "The era of denialism is over completely in South Africa."
