General Practitioners Deny Treatment to Positive Patients in Wales

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HIV-positive people in Wales are being denied treatment for common illnesses by their general practitioners (GPs) and are instead being referred to hospitals or specialists, BBC News reports. The British Medical Association denies that these actions are discriminatory.

Olwen Williams, MD, a consultant in genito-urinary medicine, affirms that the discrimination is "very subtle" with doctors referring HIV-positive patients who have common complaints to hospitals or their HIV physician instead of treating their everyday illnesses.

"If I was someone with cancer and I went to a GP with a common cold and I was told 'Sorry I can't deal with that' because I've got cancer, I'd be so amazed—that's what our patients are experiencing," Williams said. "My concern here is that we've still got fear and prejudice and ignorance that are actually driving discrimination and stigma in Wales. And I think this is something major that we have to tackle."

According to the article, the Terrence Higgins Trust, a British charity that campaigns on issues related to HIV/AIDS, has asked the Welsh Assembly Government to increase HIV training for primary care workers and provide testing and referral guidelines.

More than 1,000 people in Wales live with the virus.

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