

Russia's HIV Prevention Strategy Ignores Global Guidelines – Kommersant

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Russia's draft HIV prevention strategy doesn't fully comply with World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines and is not available for public discussion, the Kommersant business daily has [reported](#).

More than 1 million people in Russia [live](#) with HIV and a record 37,000 people died from HIV-related illnesses in the country in 2019.

Russia's new 10-year HIV prevention strategy differs little from the one that expires this year, experts told Kommersant. The current strategy has been criticized for prioritizing “moral values” and urging the avoidance of bad habits, as well as being [vaguely worded](#).

The new draft HIV prevention strategy aims to “prevent the spread of HIV in Russia by permanently reducing the number of new infections... until it's no longer a threat to public health by 2030,” according to Kommersant.

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Authorities plan to achieve that goal by raising awareness, improving access to antiretrovirals and offering a multidisciplinary approach to treatment, the paper reported.

In primary prevention, the 2030 strategy gives priority to an outreach campaign that would “reinforce traditional family and moral values” in addition to instilling safe behavior.

“The document looks weak,” Alexei Mikhailov, head of the International Treatment Preparedness Coalition’s monitoring project, told Kommersant.

The strategy does not appear to include the WHO’s guidelines endorsing condom and lubricant use as a prevention mechanism, the coalition’s expert Denis Godlevsky said.

Russia’s Health Ministry defended its draft program Thursday, saying it “fully complies with international guidelines, including those of the WHO.”

“The Russian Health Ministry will be ready to answer all your questions after the draft strategy gains interdepartmental approval,” it [said](#), according to the state-run TASS news agency.

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