

# Introduction to U=U: for Nepal Trans and MSM workshop



Simon Collins, HIV i-Base  
[www.i-Base.info](http://www.i-Base.info)

# Overview

- Introductions
- A strategy for U=U in Nepal
- First questions
- Example leaflet and poster from UK
- Studies that prove U=U is a FACT
- Other community responses

# U=U strategy in Nepal?

- Train ourselves - learnt the facts.
- Community resources to tell other HIV+ people: workshops, leaflets and posters.
- Working with key doctors and health workers - to get the doctors to publicise in guidelines
- Be creative.

i-Base fact sheet for the UK - god to all HIV clinics.

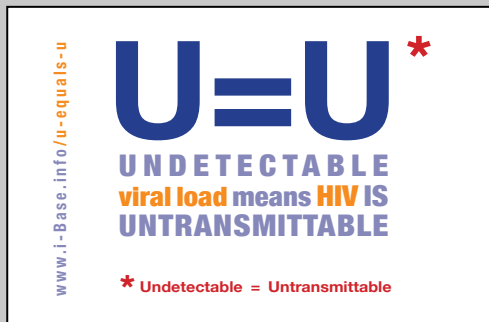
<https://i-base.info/u-equals-u-qa/>

(many translations including Japanese)

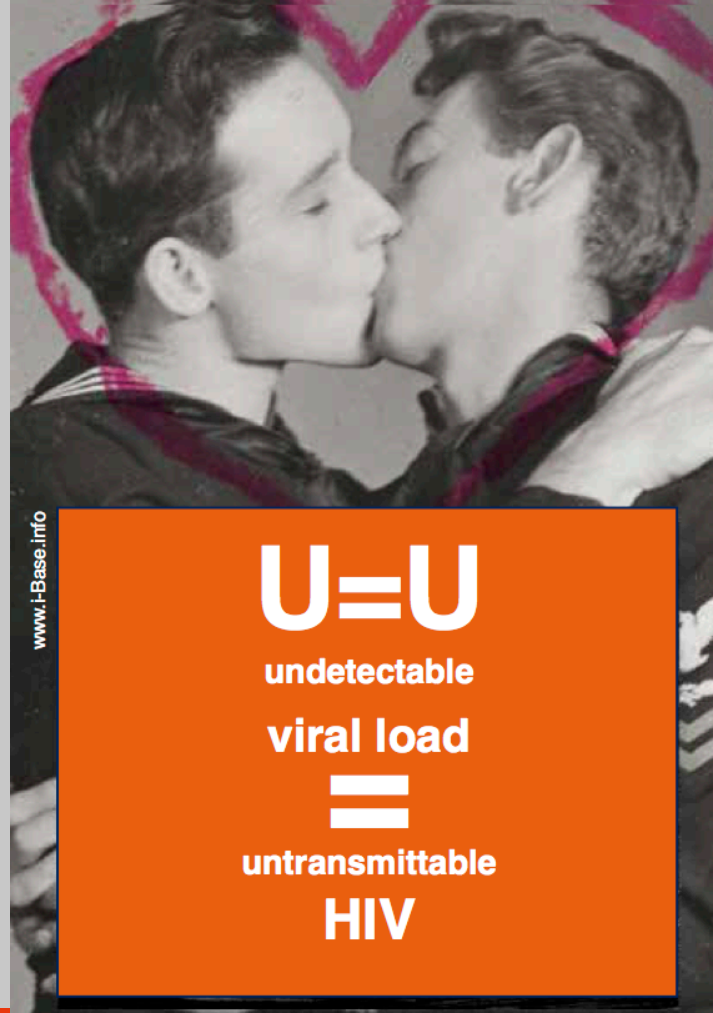
The image displays two versions of the 'U=U' fact sheet. The left version is in English, featuring a white background with an orange header bar containing the URL 'www.i-Base.info'. The title 'U=U' is in large blue letters, followed by the subtitle 'Undetectable = Untransmittable'. A key message states: 'Did you know that having an undetectable viral load on HIV treatment (ART) stops HIV transmission?'. It explains that ART is not only good for health but also protects partners, and that U=U means no need for condoms if viral load is undetectable. It cites leading UK doctors and researchers, including a quote from Professor Chloe Orkin: 'There should be no doubt that a person with sustained, undetectable levels of HIV in their blood cannot transmit HIV to their sexual partners.' The bottom of the English sheet notes that UK guidelines state HIV doctors should talk to all patients about how ART stops transmission.

The right version is in Japanese, titled 'Q&A ファクトシート' (Q&A Fact Sheet). It features a large orange background with the 'U=U' logo in black. The subtitle 'HIV Undetectable = Untransmittable' is in orange. The title 'Q&A ファクトシート' is in black, with 'Undetectable = Untransmittable Q&A factsheet' in smaller text below it. The bottom of the Japanese sheet has a white banner with the word 'factsheet' in a cursive font and a small illustration of a pen.





Free leaflets,  
postcards, to  
clinics and  
online:  
i-Base.info



# Website

<https://i-base.info/u-equals-u-qa/>

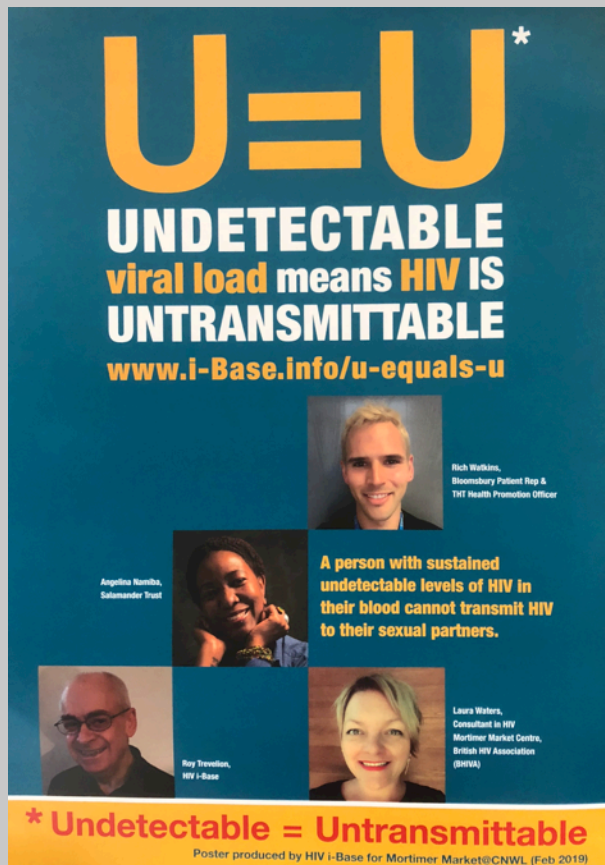
The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://i-base.info/u-equals-u-qa/>. The page header features the i-base logo and a search bar. The main content area is titled 'Questions about U=U: what, when, who, why....?' and includes a sub-header 'I-BASE'. The text explains that the following questions provide more information about why an undetectable viral load stops HIV transmission (U=U). A list of resources is provided: 'Download U=U Q&A factsheet (PDF)' and 'U=U posters and post cards for clinics.' Below this, the section 'What is U=U?' defines U=U as an abbreviation for 'Undetectable = Untransmittable' and states that it means someone with an undetectable HIV viral load cannot transmit HIV. On the right side of the page, there is a vertical sidebar with a list of links: 'PUBL', 'Public', 'Transl', 'Other', 'Pocke', 'Order', 'TREA', 'Ask a', 'Phone', 'HOME', and 'i-Base'. A large orange graphic on the right side of the main content area displays the text 'U=U undetectable viral load = untransmittable HIV'.

# First questions

- What is U=U?
- What does U=U involve?
- How can someone not be infectious?
- Does U=U work for everyone?
- Does this work with all HIV drugs?
- Does U=U work for all types of sex?
- Does this mean I can stop using condoms?

Posters for  
different  
clinics

[https://i-  
base.info/u-  
equals-u-qa/](https://i-base.info/u-equals-u-qa/)



**U=U\***

**UNDETECTABLE**  
**viral load** means **HIV IS**  
**UNTRANSMITTABLE**

[www.i-Base.info/u-equals-u](http://www.i-Base.info/u-equals-u)

Angeline Namiba,  
Salamander Trust

Rich Watkins,  
Bloomsbury Patient Rep &  
THT Health Promotion Officer

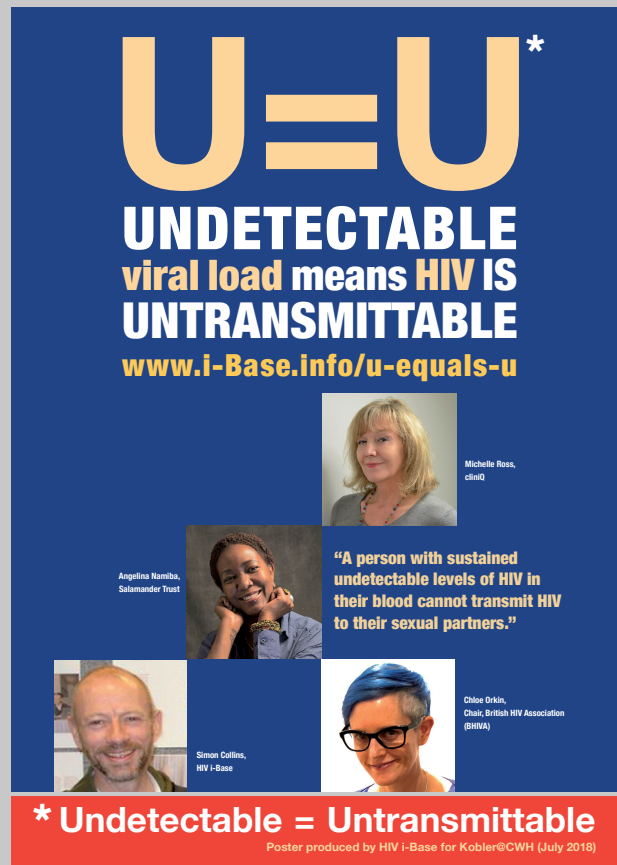
**A person with sustained undetectable levels of HIV in their blood cannot transmit HIV to their sexual partners.**

Ray Trevillion,  
HIV i-Base

Laura Walters,  
Consultant to HIV  
Mortimer Market Centre,  
British HIV Association  
(BHIVA)

**\* Undetectable = Untransmittable**

Poster produced by HIV i-Base for Mortimer Market@CNWL (Feb 2019)



**U=U\***

**UNDETECTABLE**  
**viral load** means **HIV IS**  
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[www.i-Base.info/u-equals-u](http://www.i-Base.info/u-equals-u)

Angeline Namiba,  
Salamander Trust

Michelle Ross,  
csmQ

**"A person with sustained undetectable levels of HIV in their blood cannot transmit HIV to their sexual partners."**

Simon Collins,  
HIV i-Base

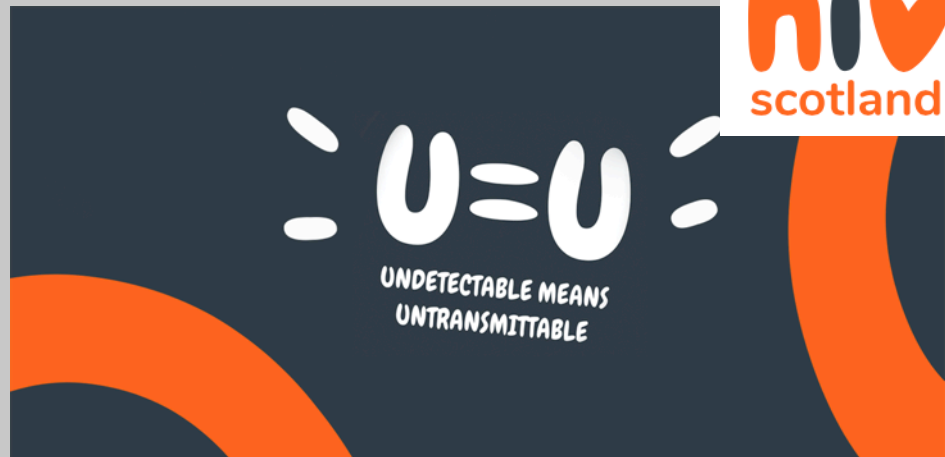
Chloe Orkitt,  
Chloe British HIV Association  
(BHIVA)

**\* Undetectable = Untransmittable**

Poster produced by HIV i-Base for Kobler@CWH (July 2018)



- HIV Scotland donation boxes with U=U screens.
- Beermats for bars.
- Led Edinburgh Pride.





# THT Can't Pass It On Campaign, 2017-2019

Launched in Summer 2017 for Pride in London and used on social media.



# Brighton: “Making stigma history”



<https://www.themartinfisherfoundation.org>

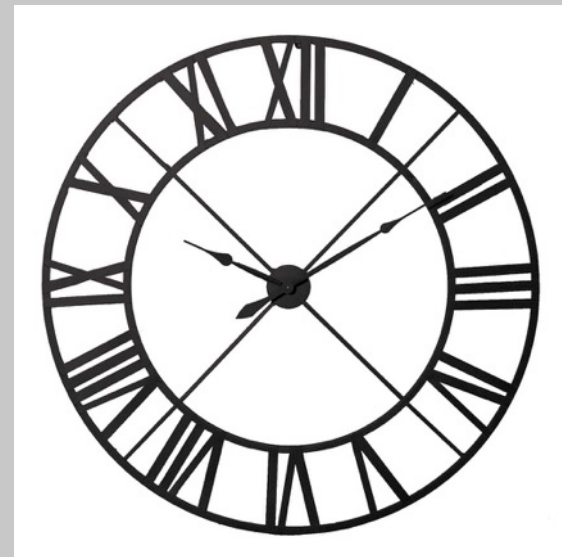
# More questions

- My partner is HIV+ and wants to use condoms
- My partner is HIV– and wants to use condoms
- Is U=U now widely believed?
- Do STIs affect the risk?
- Will my doctor know about this?
- How for viral load take to be undetectable?
- What if I forget my meds?



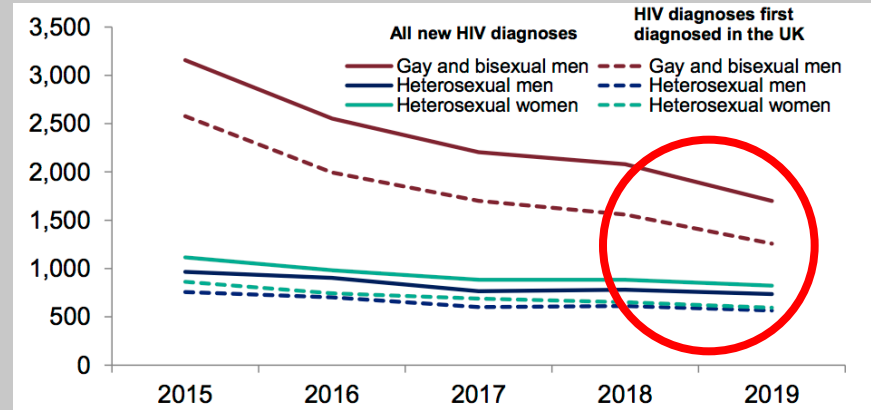
# U=U...

- Is now a FACT.
- Originally a lot of people hated the idea.
- Many HIV positive people worried.
- Many doctors worried.
- Evidence took 20 years – just like PrEP (1994 to 2012)
- Perhaps be angry this took so long – and that we are still fighting.



# UK Combination prevention

- Significant HIV drop for last 3 years (even though more testing and less condoms).
- Regular HIV testing, more often.
- Early ART (within a week).
- Nice clinics, free PrEP
- Lock down/COVID: stopped most monitoring, PrEP continued etc



Public Health England. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hiv-in-the-united-kingdom>

# Evidence and proof

<http://i-base.info/htb/32308>

*Different types of studies all showed U=U.*

Expert opinion.

Observational studies – just watching a group.

Evidence review – of many different studies.

Randomised studies (but still with condoms used)

Large observational study without condoms and with diaries to calculate risk.

# Evidence and proof

<http://i-base.info/htb/32308>

1998 US guidelines <sup>[1]</sup> and ART preventing MTCT <sup>[2]</sup>

2000 Rakai cohort <sup>[3]</sup>

2008 Swiss statement – challenge to publish cases <sup>[4]</sup>

2011 HPTN-052 <sup>[5]</sup>

2014 PARTNER 1 <sup>[6]</sup>

2018 PARTNER 2 <sup>[7]</sup>

← 2009 PARTNER starts

← 2016 U=U launch

1. DHHS, 1998; 2. Beckerman K et al IAS 1998; 3. Quinn T et al, NEJM 2000; 4. Vernazza P et al; 5. Cohen et al, NEJM 2011; 6. Rodgers A et al. CROI 2014 and JAMA 2016; 7. Rodgers A et al, IAS 2018 and The Lancet, 2019.

# Evidence 1998

<http://i-base.info/htb/32308>

1998 US guidelines <sup>[1]</sup>  
and ART in pregnancy. <sup>[2]</sup>

Major US guidelines: ART could reduce transmission... (still need condoms).

ART in pregnancy reduced risk to babies to almost zero.

1. DHHS, 1998; 2. Beckerman K et al IAS 1998



\* £50 ebay



# Evidence 2000

<http://i-base.info/htb/32308>

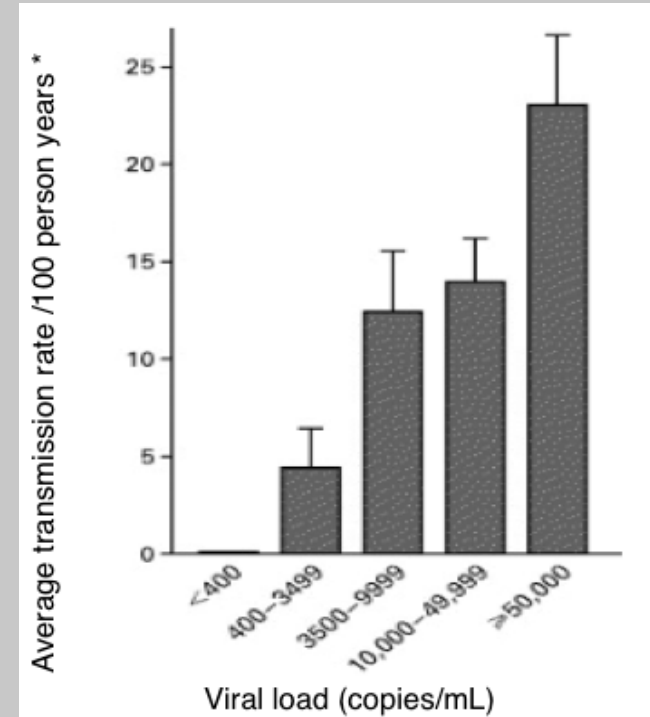
2000 Rakai cohort [3]

400 heterosexual couples

Observational study

No treatment – just link to viral load

3. Quinn T et al, NEJM 2000



# Evidence 2008

<http://i-base.info/htb/32308>

2008 Swiss statement  
challenge to publish cases [4]

Experts review 20+ studies inc.  
“spermwashing”

Zero risk – safe to conceive a baby  
**WITHOUT** condoms.

4. Vernazza P et al;



# Evidence 2011

<http://i-base.info/htb/32308>

2011 HPTN-052 [5]

Large randomised study:  
Early ART vs late ART  
1700 serodifferent couples

All transmission were in  
couples without ART.

5. Cohen et al, NEJM

1700 couples

1/28  
early with  
high VL

27/28  
no ART

96% reduction



# Evidence 2014, 2016, 2018

<http://i-base.info/htb/32308>

PARTNER 1 <sup>[6]</sup> & PARTNER 2 <sup>[7]</sup>

ZERO after 53,000 times – gay  
and straight - no condoms

ZERO after 77,000 times - gay  
men only – no condoms

*[undetectable below 200 c/mL]*

6. Rodgers A et al. CROI 2014 and JAMA 2016; 7. Rodgers A et al, IAS 2018



**The PARTNER 2 Study**

Partners of people on ART: a New Evaluation of the Risks

**HIV positive with a negative partner?  
HIV negative with a positive partner?**

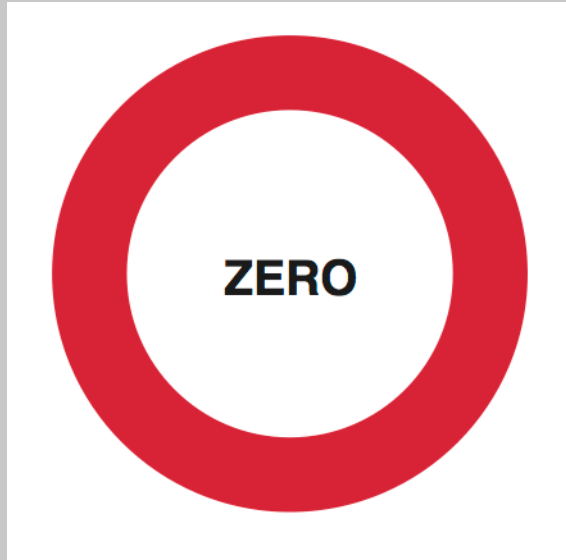
A study is looking at the impact HIV treatment has on reducing the risk of HIV transmission. While everyone wants to know these risks, there are hardly any accurate studies.

The PARTNER study is looking for couples where one partner is HIV negative and the other is HIV positive and on treatment. The study will also look at the different patterns of condom use. All information from the study will be anonymised and will be in confidence.

 **PARTNER**

[www.chip.dk/partner](http://www.chip.dk/partner)

# PARTNER studies



PARTNER 1: zero transmissions after gay and straight couples had sex more than 56,000 times <sup>[1]</sup>

PARTNER 2: zero transmissions after gay couples had sex more than 77,000 times <sup>[2]</sup>

1. Rodgers A et al. CROI 2014 and JAMA 2016; 2. Rodgers A et al, IAS 2018 and The Lancet, 2019.

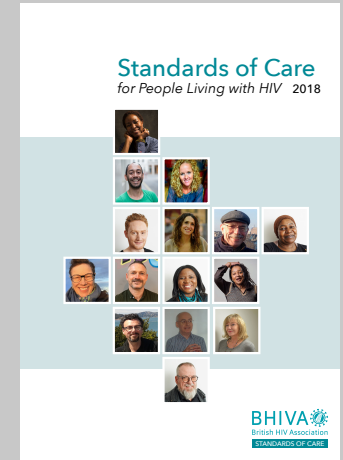
# Reverse challenge

- Data now reverses the scientific challenge:  
*Anyone suggesting transmission is possible should now provide evidence to support this hypothesis.*
- No cases 11 years after the Swiss Statement.
- No cases in >100,000 times in PARTNER.

# How to communicate...



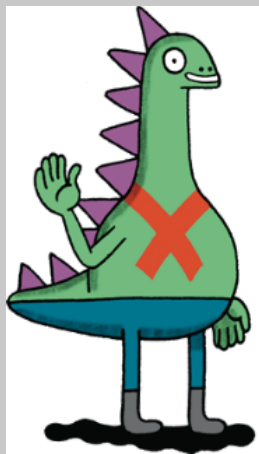
- **Community** groups for greater awareness for HIV+ and HIV– :  
Prevention Access Campaign!
- **Professional** – awareness & consistency by doctors and health workers.
- Inclusion in **guidelines** and **standards**.



# Can't Pass It On campaign



# Brighton: “Making stigma history”



<https://www.themartinfisherfoundation.org>



Thank you

Questions?

[www.i-Base.info](http://www.i-Base.info)

A vertical poster for i-base HIV treatment information service. The background is light blue with a large white pill shape in the center. The pill has an orange band across its middle. The text is arranged around and on the pill. At the top left is the i-base logo and service name. At the top right is a note about free calls. In the center, over the pill, is the text 'ASK A QUESTION' followed by contact methods. Below that is a large phone number, an email address, and a website. At the bottom is a small disclaimer.

**i-base**  
HIV treatment  
information  
service

Calls are free from  
land lines and most  
mobile networks.  
All calls are  
confidential.

**ASK A QUESTION**  
by phone, email or online  
**0808 800 6013**  
[questions@i-base.org.uk](mailto:questions@i-base.org.uk)  
[www.i-base.info](http://www.i-base.info)

Information to be used in discussion with your doctor. Registered charity no: 1081905.

# Disclosure

**No personal financial conflict of interest**

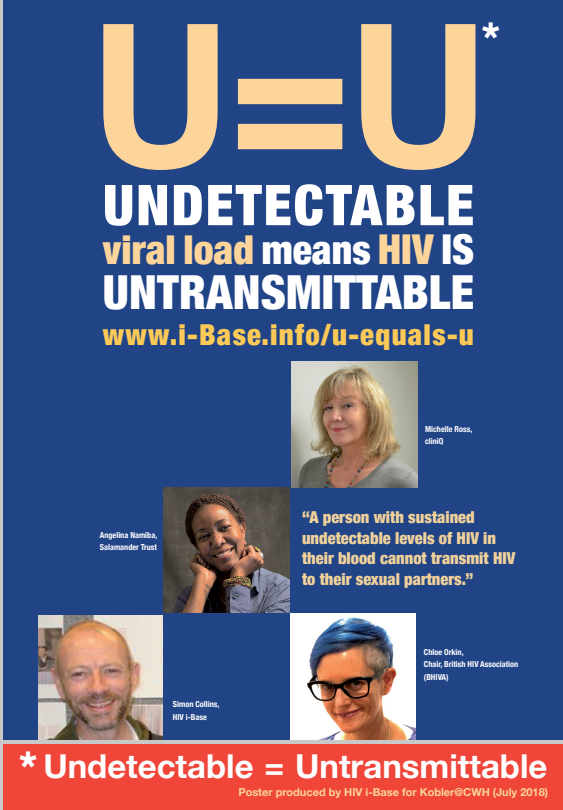
**But... I am HIV positive and I think pharma companies should support community projects from their profits with unconditional grants.**



# Posters

<https://i-base.info/u-equals-u-qa/>

Sent to all HIV clinics.  
Included HIV positive people.

A poster with a blue background and a red footer. At the top, the text 'U=U\*' is written in large, bold, orange letters. Below this, the text 'UNDETECTABLE viral load means HIV IS UNTRANSMITTABLE' is written in white and orange. The website 'www.i-Base.info/u-equals-u' is written in orange. There are four small portrait photos of people: Michelle Ross (top right), Angelina Namiba (middle left), Simon Collins (bottom left), and Chloe Drkin (bottom right). A quote from Michelle Ross is placed next to her photo: 'A person with sustained undetectable levels of HIV in their blood cannot transmit HIV to their sexual partners.' The footer is red and contains the text '\* Undetectable = Untransmittable' in white, followed by 'Poster produced by HIV i-Base for Kobler@CWH (July 2018)' in smaller white text.

**U=U\***

**UNDETECTABLE**  
viral load means **HIV IS**  
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**www.i-Base.info/u-equals-u**

Michelle Ross,  
clinIQ

Angelina Namiba,  
Salamander Trust

"A person with sustained  
undetectable levels of HIV in  
their blood cannot transmit HIV  
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Simon Collins,  
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