

# Time for a reappraisal of the real nature

Sir – It was refreshing, yet deeply disturbing, to read the article by Neville Hodgkinson ("Under suspicion: the HIV drug that held out hope for millions", 30/31 January). It demonstrated the lack of evidence of benefit, but potentially severely harmful effects, of the anti-HIV drug nevirapine and the attempts by American researchers and public institutions to cover up those facts.

One hopes that Hodgkinson's investigation prompts further inquiries, perhaps into the statistical inconsistencies, flawed projections and deceptive claims made by Aids' researchers and activists in Africa.

The clinical symptoms that define an Aids case in Africa appear in roughly equal numbers among men and women, not because of heterosexual transmission, but because the socio-economic conditions that produce those common symptoms (cough, fever, diarrhea, and weight loss) are caused by environmental insults to which many impoverished Africans – male and female – are regularly exposed.

Malnourished Africans or those who suffer from malaria, tuberculosis or repeated attacks of dysentery have many cross-reacting antibodies in their systems, making it impossible to prove that any one particular microbe was the cause of the symptoms.

The best predictors for an Aids diagnosis in Africa are economic deprivation, protein

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malnutrition, poor sanitation and parasitic infections, not extraordinary sexual behaviour or the antibodies for a virus that has proven difficult to isolate directly.

For instance, a new study by Catherine Campbell, *Letting Them Die* (James Currey, 2003) confirmed that after working three years in an impoverished South African township her sexual behaviour modification programmes utterly failed to halt the spread of Aids.

Despite such dismal results, Alex de Waal (a staunch defender of the orthodox view on Aids) proclaimed it the best book yet written on the struggle to control HIV, in *Sex in Slaughtertown*, *Times Literary Supplement*, 6 August 2004.

Because de Waal, Campbell and the Aids industry blithely accept the infectious viral theory of Aids in Africa, they stubbornly refuse to consider and dare not acknowledge why their theory yields such fruitless and unscientific results.

On the other hand, the sober essay by Hodgkinson offered abundant data for readers, scholars and investors to begin a thorough reappraisal of the real nature and origins of Aids in Africa.

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Professor of African History  
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## A different tilt

Sir – What land was Ian Watson living in when penning "Powerful reasons to be tilting at wind farms," (6/7 February). Wind farm-generated power is environmentally friendly and well, over time, become economically competitive and it is certainly a more attractive option than nuclear. I also do not share Mr Watson's view that wind farms are unsightly blots of the landscape.

T Calder  
Brentwood  
Essex

## Blot on the loch

Sir – I have been objecting to wind farms all over the UK for several years on the basis of landscape loss and, as you reported, on the basis that they simply do not work. Your recent article "Powerful reasons to be tilting

at wind farms," (6/7 February) was excellent and says it all in a nutshell. I live on the shores of Loch Awe, Scotland's largest freshwater loch, which is beautiful. One wind farm is built and six more are in the pipeline for the hills surrounding the loch. I moved here from rural Cumbria 16 years ago and the power companies with Mr Blair's backing are deluging this area with unwelcome applications. Congratulations on a well-researched article.

Peter Carmuthers  
Gillespie Bridge  
Kilchrenan  
Tayside, Angus

## False economies

Sir – A brave article by Ian Watson on wind farms ("Powerful reasons to be tilting at wind farms," 6/7 February). He made a very convincing case against them and in the process has no doubt angered many environmentalists. Only a few days after his article was published by *The Business*, the National Audit Office (NAO) reported that many wind farms operators were making huge profits – largely from government subsidies – as part of a government policy that, it said, could only result in higher electricity prices.

The NAO predicted that the overall cost of renewable energy, such as wind farms,

could add £1bn a year to electricity by the end of the decade. The cost of carbon dioxide saved from renewable energy can be more than double that benefit to society. So here we must begin admitting that it is not only add to the cost of electricity, but also an argument in favour of them.

C Robinson  
Leighton Buzzard

## Wealth of proble

Sir – Peter Dixon's review ("Tread lightly", 13/14 February 2005) is a positive view but I fear that as a country's wealthiest people are exposed to equities and bonds, about 820,000 people in the UK assets (minus pensions) of £50,000 more each, but on average only 2% of their wealth is tied up in stocks.

Their largest asset is property accounts for about 38% of their £277.72bn. Given that research shows property prices are fairly stagnant falling, many high-net worth is need to review their portfolios. I sense a strong opportunity for a management industry but it needs to up its efforts to meet the needs of governing and in some cases, to cry