

Dowsett, Gary W (2009), 'The "gay plague" revisited: AIDS and its enduring moral panic', in Gilbert Herdt (ed.), *Moral Panics, Sex Panics: The Fear and the Fight over Sexual Rights*, New York: New York University Press, chapt. 4, pp. 130-156.

Abstract:

This chapter re-visits the moral panic that has surrounded HIV/AIDS since the pandemic began. It re-visits the positioning of homosexuality (and therefore gay men) at the heart of that panic (originally argued by Simon Watney), and reviews the swing between an obsession with gay and other homosexually active men and the neglect of them in public health responses ever since. The chapter then questions the increasing international deployment of 'homophobia' as the social and political explanation for the obsession-neglect swing, and uses examples from Australia, the US as well as other places to explore to examine the politics of moral panics. Finally, the chapter concludes with re-asserting the centrality of (male) homosexuality to the politics of the pandemic even when gay men are not the issue at hand.