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The opioid crisis: it is time for a global awakening

The opioid overdose crisis has claimed millions of lives and represents an increasingly global challenge. Meanwhile, three-quarters of the world's population lacks access to pain relief and palliative care. Behind the statistics, there are real people, facing dreadful circumstances. The extensive mobilization of people with lived experience of HIV transformed the history of medicine, accelerated discovery, and sparked new conversations about human rights and equitable care. More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated how concerted international collaboration and action can address complex and widespread health threats. Now is the time to harness this wisdom to address the opioid epidemic worldwide.