

Sexualities Special Issue: Queer Immunities/Immunologies, Queer Virology

Deadline: Sep 30, 2023

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CFP: Special Issue for the journal Sexualities.

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Deadline for the submission of abstracts: 30 June 2023

Deadline for the submission of manuscripts: 30 September 2023

Queer Immunities/Immunologies, Queer Virology

Ever since the HIV/AIDS crisis of the 1980's, queer bodies – and at the time, specifically gay men – have always somehow been singled out, and stigmatized – in the fields of immunity, immunology, and virology. The AIDS crisis of the 1980's in particular demonstrated that the fields of immunity, immunology and virology do not just involve bodies and lives that exist in a vacuum – infections, diseases, epidemics and pandemics are thoroughly political phenomena that are further imbued with an economic and social dimension, or what Joshua Pocius has recently termed the 'geocorpogeographies of HIV' (Pocius, 2016). All of this has been reiterated through the recent focus on gay and bisexual men and the Mpox, or monkeypox outbreak, amongst other things.

In this regard, it also therefore makes sense to speak of not one kind of immunity but multiple immunities; not one immunology, but multiple immunologies – because how we experience infectious diseases is contingent on not just our gender, sexual orientation, race, and socio-economic position, but also where we are located geopolitically (i.e. in the Global North or the Global South). And research on HIV (with a particular focus on a subtype found predominantly in North America, Europe and Australia) has further produced geographic and economic inequalities for HIV treatment (Crane, 2011).

Fighting epidemics, as Catherine Waldby has argued, are also about the battle to control the nature/culture distinction (Waldby, 1996) – in itself a contested binary and not as impermeable as it would at first appear, as epidemics and pandemics clearly prove, and in light of research on the human microbiome, amongst other things. The changes wrought by various forms of capitalism, including urbanization and new forms of transportation, have further brought increased potential for 'contagion' (Ferri, 2018) – but have also increased potential for collectivity, for knowledge-sharing and for the building of communities and sites of resistance. Within this context, queer people have not been merely passive victims of infectious diseases and viral agents – they have been

active advocates and resistors and have moulded and directed the destiny of how infectious agents are encountered, conceptualized, articulated and resisted on a global scale. And queer activism has not just relegated itself to a narrow focus on the Global North, instead also advocating for those involved in pharmaceutical trials in the Global South, for example, such as Act Up Paris protesting against alleged violations of ethical standards of PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) trials in Cameroon and Cambodia in the early 2000's (Schubert, 2020). And there has also been, of course, the substantial activism and achievements of queer and other activists living in the Global South – reflecting the truly global/transnational nature of queer activism within the context of queer immunities/immunologies and queer virology.

This special issue calls for papers that explore the fields of queer immunities/immunologies and queer virology and its intersections with gender and sexualities. The call is broad and welcomes contributions from the fields of not just biomedicine, but also films, art and art history, and literature, amongst others.

The CFP welcomes contributions that explore, but by all means is not restricted to, the below:

- The ongoing Global North/Global South divide in HIV research and HIV access and implementation of treatment.
- The overlooking/elision of queer women from HIV discourse.
- Mpox and queer immunities/immunologies and queer virology.
- The global molecular politics of HIV.
- The medicalization of HIV prevention and treatment (and a shift away from behavioural strategies) through the use of new biomedical interventions such as Treatment as Prevention (TasP), PrEP and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP).
- The immune system as a 'corporeal nanotheatre' or 'nanocinema' (Waldby, 1996: 64) of sexual relations and/or sexual identities, and the broader global, local, social, economic, and political contexts in which these sexual relations and/or sexual identities are lived, embodied, and experienced.
- Marxist/Political economy perspectives on queer immunities/immunologies and queer virology.
- The lives and artworks of gay/queer artists afflicted by AIDS, such as David Wojnarowicz, Félix González-Torres, and Keith Haring.
- The representation of sexualities, gender identities, and HIV/AIDS in films.
- Queer immunities/immunologies, queer virology and bioart.
- Pharmaceutical companies, profit, biocapitalism, and queer activism/sites of resistance.
- Patents, public research funding, biocapitalism and queer activism/sites of resistance.
- Slut-shaming and the "PrEP whore"/ "Truvada whore", and its connections with the slut-shaming of cis-gender women.

References

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Waldby, C. (1996) *AIDS and the Body Politic: Biomedicine and Sexual Difference*, London: Routledge.

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CFP: Sexualities Special Issue: Queer Immunities/Immunologies, Queer Virology. In: ArtHist.net, Mar 27, 2023 (accessed Jan 15, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/38903>>.