Anthony Brink is an advocate of the High Court of South Africa and former prosecutor, district and regional magistrate, and civil magistrate. He is the national chairman of the Treatment Information Group, a voluntary association he founded in 2002 to promote research-based public debate of antiretroviral (ARV) drug policy, non-toxic treatment approaches to AIDS, and HIV testing issues in South Africa.

Brink has been researching and reviewing the clinical and molecular pharmacology literature on the ARV drugs AZT and nevirapine in depth for more than a decade, and has written extensively about them. An early draft of his book *Debating AZT*, then subtitled *Questions of safety and utility*, which he sent to government in mid-1999, led President Mbeki to order an enquiry into the drug in Parliament on 28 October that year.

Brink's expertise as an autodidact expert in the pharmacology of AZT and nevirapine has been recognized by senior scientists worldwide: *Debating AZT: Mbeki and the AIDS drug controversy* (Pietermaritzburg: Open books, 2000) was described by Etienne de Harven MD, Emeritus Professor of Pathology, University of Toronto, Canada, as 'excellent … the best, most comprehensive review on AZT currently available'. Harvey Bialy PhD, founding scientific editor of the leading, widely cited scientific journal *Nature Biotechnology* (formerly *Bio/Technology*), considered it 'Absolutely spectacular … superb … the definitive refutation'. Peter Duesberg PhD, Professor of Molecular Biology, University of California at Berkeley, US, and member of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, described it as 'superb, extremely well researched, analyzed,

written … I could not have done a better job … Are you a scientist or do you collaborate with one? How could you survey so many scientific publications as an attorney? … Could you publish your article or a variant of it in a medical/scientific journal? It would strengthen our case no end, if scientific papers of that quality would come from several sources, not only from Berkeley and Perth'. To an Indian journalist he remarked: 'I still can't believe he wrote that. He's really a molecular biologist pretending to be a lawyer.'

The foreword to *Debating AZT* was written by South Africa's leading investigative journalist, Martin Welz, editor and publisher of *noseweek*. His English counterpart at *Private Eye*, the late Paul Foot, esteemed it similarly: 'Very good, convinced me completely.' The late Donald Woods too: 'Deserves serious treatment. More strength to your arm.'

Following the publication of *Debating AZT*, Brink has performed an extensive review of the research literature on the foetal toxicity of the drug, *Poisoning our Children: AZT in pregnancy*, in regard to which the Perth Group (Australian biophysicist Eleni Papadopulos-Eleopulos and colleagues) remarked, 'Quite clearly your knowledge-base in this subject extends far beyond ours.'

The inventor of AZT, Dr Richard Beltz PhD, Professor of Biochemistry at Loma Linda University School of Medicine, California, told Brink that he was 'justified in sounding a warning against the long- term therapeutic use of AZT, or its use in pregnant women, because of its demonstrated toxicity and side effects. Unfortunately, the devastating effects of AZT emerged only after the final level of experiments was well underway … Your effort is a worthy one. … I hope you succeed in convincing your government not to make AZT available.'

After reading the original first half of Brink's book *The trouble with nevirapine* on the internet, Dr Jonathan Fishbein, formerly Director of the Office for Policy in Clinical Research Operations, Division of AIDS, US National Institutes of Health, wrote to praise it as 'an expertly written piece about this very dangerous drug'. Fishbein is the top-ranking official who blew the whistle on the irredeemably corrupt manner in which the clinical trial HIVNET 012 was conducted in Uganda, and how the serious

adverse events data were corruptly suppressed by the director of his division. HIVNET 012 is the study on the basis of which the South African government was ordered by the Constitutional Court to supply nevirapine to pregnant women and their newborn babies, mostly black, mostly poor.

In recognition of his expertise as a self-trained expert in the subject of the toxic pharmacology ARVs, Brink was honoured with a co-authorship credit of a major scientific monograph published by Papadopulos-Eleopulos et al. in November 2001, *Mother to Child Transmission of HIV and its Prevention with AZT and Nevirapine: A Critical Analysis of the Evidence*.

All Brink's completed work has been published on the internet in the public interest, where it can be freely accessed for non-commercial use at his group's website www.tig.org.za and on many other websites around the world. His work has been translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, French, German, Italian, and Dutch.

Anticipating a career in law, Brink took Latin instead of biology at high school, but was tutored extramurally by his grandfather in microbiology, microtechnique and photomicrography to an advanced level, making slides of micro-organisms, blood smears, and triple-stained sections of various tissues. Before this, he taught himself chemistry, culminating in adventures with home-made high explosives, and had a provisional patent on a gadget he invented at the age of 10.

Brink is a jazz enthusiast who co-founded a multiracial jazz club during the apartheid 'emergency' era in the late eighties, featuring performances by many of South Africa's leading jazz musicians; operated a recording studio he built; managed a professional African pop group; played in a jazz band; engineered concert sound; and wrote jazz concert reviews for the *Natal Witness* newspaper.

He has two teenage sons, and lives in Pietermaritzburg.

Brink's books are free online at Open books