



**MY WAY:** Dr Matthias Rath of the Rath Foundation, which promotes the use of specific vitamins in the fight against Aids, listens to an HIV-positive person praise the apparent effectiveness of the treatment.  
*Picture: ROGAN WARD*

## Aids dissident uses 'infomercial' tactics to sell vitamins

**DOMINIQUE HERMAN**

**YESTERDAY** was a "historic" day for the people of South Africa as far as vitamin entrepreneur Matthias Rath was concerned, as 20 people gathered to demonstrate what micronutrients had done to "reverse" their HIV/Aids related symptoms.

In the style of an infomercial, each person spoke of his or her positive experience. The Dr Rath Health Foundation's Monde Tulwana translated what they were saying.

"Here they are in front of you saying yes, we are getting better; yes, we feel better; yes, natural health works," he said.

But Aids activists and researchers were angered yesterday by Rath's renewed claims.

"There is no published data anywhere in the world that vitamin supplements have anything like the impact of anti-retrovirals," said Robin Wood, who runs the Desmond Tutu HIV Research Centre at the University of Cape Town.

"I have used general vitamin supplements over the years along with anti-retrovirals and I've never been able to show that they make a difference to the survival of patients at all," he said, adding that ART reduces the death rate of Aids patients

by 90%.

Rath refused to respond to this latest criticism, saying it would "tarnish the positive message" he was trying to put across and that those (critical) organisations would be "wiped away by history".

Treatment Action Campaign spokesman Nathan Geffen said: "This man is a charlatan. There is nothing scientific about his study. The consequence is that many people have died and will die as a result of the confusion that he has created and by not taking the medicine they should have."

Among those paraded yesterday by Rath was Marrieta Ndzib

who was diagnosed with HIV in 1999. She said she started taking the vitamins three months ago when her CD4 white blood cell count was 365. She said it had increased to 841.

"I had boils on my arms and I couldn't walk properly. I couldn't talk. After five days (of taking the vitamins) I felt something that changed in my body," she said.

Rath ended the presentation by showing pictures of the International Criminal Court in The Hague, saying that from this point on, anyone who ignored "the fact" that Aids can be controlled naturally would be held accountable in court.