2020 Top HIV Treatment Stories

COVID-19, HIV vaccines, cure news and long-acting injectables stood out among the top HIV treatment stories of the year.

December 30, 2020 By Ian Anderson and Liz Highleyman

As in all areas of health and medicine, COVID-19 dominated the HIV treatment news this year. In the early days of the pandemic, POZ published a roundup of what people with HIV need to know about the new coronavirus (No. 1). At the time, small studies and anecdotal reports suggested that people living with HIV were not more likely to acquire the new coronavirus or to develop severe COVID-19 (No. 2).

In fact, there were some early hints that meds taken for HIV prevention or treatment might offer some protection against the new virus (the top POZ news story of the year) and antiretrovirals might be used to treat it; neither was confirmed in later research. As the year went on, larger studies suggested that people with HIV indeed might be more susceptible to severe COVID-19. See our year-end roundup HIV and COVID-19: What Do We Know Now?

As the first COVID-19 vaccines rolled out in December, questions arose about whether they're safe for people with HIV (No. 4). Many asked how a coronavirus vaccine could be developed so fast while we still don't have one for HIV. As scientists have learned over the past three decades, developing an HIV vaccine is a more difficult endeavor. But much research is underway (No. 6, No. 10, No. 16), including an experimental HIV vaccine that uses the same mRNA technology as the first two authorized COVID-19 vaccines (No. 8).

POZ readers also sought HIV cure news. Sadly, the first man cured of HIV, Timothy Ray Brown, died this year after a relapse of the cancer that led to his groundbreaking bone marrow transplant. But we heard about a man in Brazil who remains in long-term remission without antiretrovirals (No. 15) and an American woman whose own immune system may have cured her HIV (No. 3).

On the HIV treatment front, readers are concerned about the growing evidence linking modern antiretrovirals to weight gain (No. 9, No. 18). People with HIV are eagerly awaiting the first long-acting injectable treatment, which has already been approved in Canada and Europe (No. 13). Long-acting cabotegravir is also highly effective for pre-exposure prophylaxis (No. 14)—more so than Truvada, which got its first generic equivalent this year (No. 7).

Here are the POZ treatment news stories with the most views this year:

1. What People With HIV Need to Know About the New Coronavirus
Posted: March 13

2. How Many People With HIV Are Getting COVID-19?
Posted: April 24

3. First Woman May Be Cured of HIV Without a Bone Marrow Transplant
Posted: August 28

4. The First COVID-19 Vaccine Is Here. Is It Safe for People With HIV?
Posted: December 16

5. Remdesivir Shows Promise for COVID-19, but Not a Game Changer
Posted: June 3

6. Can a Single Vaccine Injection Functionally Cure HIV?
Posted: November 3

7. First Generic Truvada Now Available in the United States
Posted: October 2

8. Experimental HIV Vaccine Stimulates Production of Neutralizing Antibodies
Posted: August 21

9. Diabetes Drug Metformin Tied to Weight Loss in People With HIV
Posted: August 26

10. Large Trial of HIV Vaccine Finds It Does Not Prevent HIV
Posted: February 3

11. Could People With AIDS Be Denied Ventilators for COVID-19?
Posted: March 25

12. "Unprecedented" Transmission of Highly Drug-Resistant HIV in France
Posted: September 12

13. Canada Is the First to Approve Long-Acting HIV Regimen Cabenuva
Posted: March 23

14. Long-Acting Injectable PrEP Proves as Effective as Truvada
Posted: May 18

15. Man With HIV Is in Long-Term Viral Remission After Intensified Treatment
Posted: July 7

16. HIV Rebounds Quickly in Semen During Treatment Break in Vaccine Trial

Posted: June 5

17. Refined Mapping of HIV’s Reservoir Could Aid in Cure Research
Posted: October 12

18. Study Sheds Light on Weight Gain After Switching to New Tenofovir
Posted: November 3

19. Concerns Arise Over Blood Donated by People on Antiretrovirals
Posted: August 5

20. Gene Therapy Cure Claims Are Premature, Advocates Say
Posted: August 13

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