The Way We Live Now: Jon Kaiser

Doctor

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I believe that we now have all the tools necessary to keep HIV positive people healthy for normal lifespans. The problem with the dominant treatment model is that people are being overmedicated with antiretroviral drugs in the absence of aggressive natural therapy programs. My experience, backed by a study comparing my patients to similar ones treated conventionally, is that those who use diet changes, supplements, hormones and stress reduction measures along with medications (or start drugs later) have better outcomes: They use fewer antiretrovirals, have longer periods before viral load returns -- thus preserving the option to use newer drugs later -- and suffer less illnesses and side effects.

The research community should investigate natural therapies that can strengthen the immune system and enhance drug combinations. And rather than always studying one treatment at a time -- a vitamin here, an exercise form there -- what's crucial is to test complete programs. Because over and over, I've seen that integrative medicine offers PWAs the best chance to survive and thrive.

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