Letters—March 2015

February 12, 2015

Strength Training

In his blog post "Why I Still (Kinda, Sorta) Go to the Gym" (November 4, 2014), long-term survivor Bruce Ward writes about how his gym membership has been the one consistency through 30 years of living with HIV and how he's not ready to give up on hope, happiness and life.

Like you, I'm not ready to give up, even if it sometimes feels like I should. I truly believe going to the gym and staying employed have given me a lot of sanity and hope. I take it easy at the gym and don't feel too bad if I miss one day. It's when I miss a week that I feel awful, but I quickly get back on track. Don't ever stop or you will rust!

Luis R

Thank you for this timely post. I can't believe I started crying reading it. Anger, depression, stress and fear course though me constantly. Sometimes in parallel, some-times just one at a time. I am just trying to figure out how to live or stay alive. You just told me to stay alive for today and gave me hope in knowing that there are ups and downs.

Dave

Thank you for this excellent article. Most of it resembles my own life and experiences. Twenty-eight years after being diagnosed, I'm not ready to give up either, even if it sometimes does become somewhat overwhelming. Thanks for the reminder that there is always hope and that we must persevere.

Edgar Colon-Hernandez

Working out eases most of my stress and depression. I have only been out for a little over two years and was diagnosed with HIV last year, on September 10. I felt ashamed, depressed, fearful and stressed all at the same time. Some days I just want to give up. Then I think of all those who sacrificed so that I have my meds today. Plus I have no reason to complain so much as I am a newbie. You have lived as a survivor for many years. One thing that I hope for all of this is a loving partner. You are awesome, man. Thanks for sharing!

Steve Charter

Highly Illogical?

The POZ Staff Blog "Zachary Quinto on 'Laziness' and 'Irresponsibility'" (November 12, 2014) highlights the controversial comments made by actor Zachary Quinto about PrEP and HIV among youth in an interview with Out magazine and his follow-up response on the Huffington Post.

I sort of agree with his comments about complacency. However, his comments about PrEP are anti-sex. There is nothing wrong with recreational sex. Sex is not just for reproduction; it is recreational. We do know about long-term effects of Truvada. This medication has been used for a long time in combination therapies. I took it while I was positive. I had no negative effects. I would take it to prevent HIV.

Timothy Ray Brown

Editor's Note: Brown is the first person cured of HIV.

Quinto could have taken this moment to spread a viable prevention message, instead of castigating a generation who wasn't even born in the '80s. Having a pretty face and playing an ultra-logical being on movie screens do not make one qualified to comment on things about which one is poorly informed!

Michael Luciano

I don't think Zach is being "sex negative" at all, or indicating he doesn't have sex. Despite the unfortunate use of the word "recreational," I think we get what Zach is saying, even if it may not be what we want to hear. I vote to proceed with caution; after all, there are lots of other STIs out there too.

Facundo

It's sad that whenever someone—like Quinto—says anything that reads as less than 100 percent in favor of rampaging bareback sex, they're accused of being "sex-negative." Taking some personal responsibility to prevent the spread of all kinds of STIs, not just HIV, isn't sex-negative; it's common-sense positive.

Thaniel Chase

I do not understand how the HIV rate is rising with the knowledge we have today. People are

becoming lazy and irresponsible.

Robert

Drug Update

In his article "It's Time for Tenofovir 2.0" (December 1, 2014), Benjamin Ryan writes about the upgrade to tenofovir (Viread) as part of a single-pill combination regimen with the same components as Stribild. The upgraded version of tenofovir (known as TAF) offers several benefits over the previous version.

It's amazing to have the new formulation in the fight. I just wish our lawmakers could force companies to not hold out on developing and releasing these lifesaving drugs. Making it a stand-alone drug or releasing and seeking approval for it when it was developed could have saved lives and complications.

Anonymous

The marketing antics of Gilead are not going to reduce the cost of HIV drugs anytime soon. At least the anti-PrEP crowd will no longer be able to tout resistance as an issue (it never really was). Less drugs, fewer side effects, all good! But the cost of HIV drugs will continue to rise.

Dick Keiser, Deerfield Beach

Not only have they sat on this development while my kidney function numbers decline, they refuse to release TAF as a stand-alone drug. If I want it, I have to switch to their choice for my regimen, not my doctor's or mine. Where is Gilead's social responsibility? Where is legislation to protect consumers from this horrible behavior?

Andy Fyne, San Francisco

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