Haarthrobs

July 31, 2008 By David Weiss

If you are reading this blog, then the odds are reasonably good that in the past few days you?ve also read here on Poz/Aidsmeds that according to one recently published study, the life expectancy for people with HIV has increased by an average of 13 years since the late 1990s thanks to better HIV treatments. The study found that a person now diagnosed at 20 years old could expect to live for another 49 years.

That news - suggesting that an average 20 year-old (?Person X?) with HIV now can expect to live to age 69 - is a glass that is either half full or half empty.

The glass is half full because twenty years ago most of you who had HIV back then had little hope that they would live more than just a few years, much less 49. The glass is half empty because those of you, like myself, who had HIV back then, had it since we were 30 or so, and our bodies did therefor not benefit from HAART drugs until much later than the theoretical Person X. If you do a little math, it suggests that you probably have around another 10 years of existence left on planet Earth. If you also happen to coinfected with Hep C, your half-glassful of remaining human existence is probably closer to another six or seven years. In theory, anyway.

So now that you?ve heard the admittedly lugubrious knell of this tarnished brass bell, what do you do about it?

If you are politically inclined, do you let the next generation of Pozzies carry the banner of AIDS activism, or do you pick up the battle flag and charge into the glorious sunset?

If you?ve been in a long-term relationship with someone, but you?ve lost that lovin? feeling, should you stay on the same commuter train to nowhere, or should you fly to the opposite end of the globe to share what might only be a few days of joy with that special man or woman you met on line?

If you are safe and comfortable in your home in the hills, do you spend all of your remaining allotment of life in your favorite armchair with a bottle of Budweiser watching endless re-runs of Law and Order on cable TV, or do you sell the farm and go para-gliding in the South Pacific?

We are all different. I may be a pretty smart guy, but I won?t pretend that I know all of the answers to my own personal questions, much less the answers to yours. If you?ve reached that fork in your biological road, only you can decide which road to take. Do you know which road you want to ride? I have a pretty good idea where I?m going. If you want to know where exactly where that may be, just stay tuned...

The Pepfar Bill

On a lighter (?) note, now that the Pepfar reauthorization bill - with its HIV travel ban elimination intact -

has been signed into law, we can all be hopeful that those countries that have not yet recognized the pointless inhumanity of banning people with HIV will follow suit. We've come a long way from the days when we were feared as vectors of death, but there is still much that must be done by all of us. Nevertheless, the reauthorization and enactment of Pepfar is a victory for all of us.

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