Pete Thitiwatt: “Online Bullying when a PWHIV advocates U=U”

This is a guest blog by Pete Thitiwatt, an advocate from Thailand, who describes the painful experience shared by too many people with HIV who are risking their personal and professional reputations, and sometimes their safety, to share the truth.

October 28, 2020 By Undetectable = Untransmittable

Hello, before I start, I’d like to thank you everyone for giving me chance to speak something on this very big stage, one of the biggest for my life!
Ok, so let’s get started. My name’s Pete Thitiwat. People know me as Pete living with HIV, I’ve lived with HIV for a 5year since 2015 and I’m on medication since then until now. I take care of myself in anyway I’m so healthy.
My HIV Status right now is “Positive Undetectable” since 2016. I’m sure that I am one of the people who living with HIV 100% Untransmittable HIV through sexual contract to my partner anymore. Definitely I’ve believed, trusted, on U=U.
✅
Before the time that I realize the knowledge of U=U, my feelings in that period were so depressed. I didn’t even have to hear people’s words of stigma, a shame on me that having HIV. But after I’ve learned something about U=U, I feel like my darkest way seems to certain the light....
I keep on learning about U=U since that time until now, the feeling before and after knowing this are so contrast,
If I know U=U early of time to living with HIV.
I might not abandon my business when I found out HIV+
I might not abandon my beloved one because of self-stigma
I might not abandon my life into being People who use drugs.
I might not abandon all I had if I realize this before...
U=U bring my life not just survive from the worst time but it make me realize the valuable way to live with HIV.
Once I’ve proved U=U is work! I decided to share this story on my Facebook Page with many followers. I expected to share people to know more and understand deeply about U=U, because there is not many PLWH know this.
U=U is so important very mean to me and PEHIV. I could overcome my internal stigma and accepted myself whatever I am.
It felt like I was reborn.
And I think that U=U is the first thing must know when we found out HIV Positive.
Before taking ART for the first day. Because of people who have known U=U have an outcome of health both physical and mental is better than people who living with HIV haven’t known yet.
Knowing U=U benefits for Decreasing Internal-Stigma,
Self-Acceptance to be HIV+,

Better Adherence,
Set the goal of medication to Undetectable Viral Load.
Being Normalization living with HIV.
By my decision to share that story, people disagree with me becuase of many reasons, and they make me popular on social media until I've my own hashtag trend on Twitter over 3 times. You can try searching these hashtags on google and you'll find it
But those hashtags have come with people who disagreed with me and sometimes it was too much until those words they say came with stigma words or words of bullying.
One of the most common is "IF YOU're Brilliant, why do you have an HIV??", let's think that they say this with aggressive feelings... with bad many bad words
My questions back to them just
- I made a mistake, don't I have right to learn how to survive and accept, even Find to way to live with HIV with Happiness as much as possible? Absolutely Yes!
But before I made these mistakes, I walk through education, hospital, medical organizations, etc. but I didn't even realize the correct information about U=U before until I'm here, living with it by myself, learn by myself, and understand it...
So I just expect to be a person who is a part to solving this problem, I'm one of them, to stand up, advocate the facts about U=U , make it clear about this and correct it for the society with well understanding...
And the most important thing to advocates U=U is "PLWH can implement U=U into their real-life. Under the conditions of their life differently. So they could create their own life to living with HIV by themself.
But form my case, there was not only people in society make the stigma on me and people live with HIV... but also Healthcare Workers have done it too..
Healthcare Workers and related orgnizations are the group that I most expect to make clear and make people understand more about U=U and not stigma or bully to people living with HIV...
But in the period of time that my hashtags were talked about what are the actions of them???
80-90% of their comment are "Bullying"
So we need to help those people understand this for more and learn to respect others not bullying ✅
From past events I, as a well-understanding about HIV and advocates U=U became a person has been under heavy criticism. And no one believes when I'm saying U = U is true. But that was created a big perception about U=U in early of this years in Thailand.
But in-term of bullying. All of us could help to decrease Social Bullying to PWHIV by Talk about U=U more often, say it like Everyone in this world accept U = U without any doubt already.
And we are not talking about U=U for make people don't not believe become to believe.
But we speak to people who have not known U=U yet.
And no matter what role we are in society.
We shouldn't be part of that bullying. And must go in, decrease it and suppress, mitigate the bully. And protect the people who are being bullied . Not being a part of supporting Bulling. Whether it's a people living with HIV or not!
No one deserves to be bullied. I,You,We,They deserves to be respected as a human being!
Human-Being is too much more enough to be respected not bullied.
Thank you.

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