The POZ/DDF Ratio

October 8, 2008 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.

I'd wager that many of you have visited Craigslist.org at some time in your life. I've searched Craigslist for jobs, apartments and significant others. Although I'm off the dating market, the stench of trying to find a date on Craigslist as an HIV-positive person stubbornly remains in my nostrils.

As a native New Yorker who still lives in the New York City area, I'm going to use their New York site to explain what I mean (although I'm confident other cities would be similar).

To get some fresh perspective, I searched today on newyork.craigslist.org/m4m (Warning: The words and photos in the M4M section?well, in the entire personals section on Craigslist—are sexually explicit!) and got the following results: I typed in "DDF" (an acronym for "drug and disease free"—ugh, I have so many issues with that phrase which I'll explore in another post) in the search field. I got 962 results. I typed in "POZ" (need I explain?) in the search field. I got 45 results.

The POZ/DDF ratio is mind-numbing. Less than 5 percent of the posts on Craigslist M4M stating a preference for HIV status are friendly to HIV-positive gay men (and different search criteria won't change the essence of my argument).

I don't have a problem with HIV-negative men who have educated themselves on HIV transmission and have nonetheless concluded that sex with someone who is HIV-positive is too much of a risk for them to take. I may disagree with them, but that is their informed decision.

I do have a problem with HIV-negative men specifying "DDF" who have not properly educated themselves on HIV transmission (although many say they have) and have wrongly concluded that sex with someone who is HIV-positive will automatically put them at undue risk for HIV transmission even if safer sex methods are used. (Not to mention that "DDF" is too often the only HIV prevention effort many of these men engage in, but I digress?again, that's for another post.)

I'm picking on Craigslist, but they're not alone. There are plenty of other sites filled with stigma and rejection if you're HIV-positive. At least on POZ Personals and other HIV-friendly dating sites, you can focus on your search for love instead of your HIV status.

Click here to read "HIV Status Unknown for 'Negative' Men Online" from POZ Treatment News—the article discusses a study that reveals disturbing disclosure trends online ("Of the men who'd never been tested for HIV, 72 percent said that all of their online profiles stated their HIV status as

negative...”).

UPDATE: Click here to read “Deconstructing DDF”—another post that I promised above to explain why the phrase “DDF” bothers me.

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/blog/the-pozddf-rati-1