



The Phoenix

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January 10, 2011

After much consideration the board has decided to change the name of the newsletter to **The Phoenix!** Like the mythical bird, we regularly seem to rise from the ashes.

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Message from the Chair

It is the dawn of a new decade and 30 years since the first cases of AIDS were reported in 1981. The race to discover a way to combat this deadly and debilitating disease forced its way to the forefront of the public consciousness as the rate of infection affected people from all walks of life. It is disconcerting that the rate of HIV/AIDS infection is on the increase and is back to the levels of 1982. It is one of the fastest spreading infectious diseases amongst young people, yet our federal and provincial governments are cutting back its funding of social programs and vaccine development and apparently medicinal marijuana and harm reduction may also be at risk.

VIPWAS has been helping this community for the past 18 years with peer support and prevention programs, hand in hand with VIHA and our many supporters, volunteers, and dedicated staff.

I was honoured to become a member of the board at the VIPWAS Annual General Meeting held at New Horizons Community Centre in James Bay on December 3, 2010, and would like to assure all of you that we will continue to provide the support and services with compassion and understanding in a safe and encouraging environment. We will also have, in the first quarter of this year, some new programs such as Art Therapy and I encourage all of our members to take an active part in the ac-

tivities that are available. We will update our calendar regularly and keep you informed of new programs and activities.

We continue to assist newly diagnosed individuals and all who come to us with support and assistance wherever and whenever we can. Our staff and volunteers do an incredible job in making this Society a welcoming place of calm and humanity in what can sometimes be an isolating and challenging world.

Join us this year to help reduce the number of newly diagnosed individuals by speaking out to those you know and love. Talk to them about how the disease is spread, about prevention and

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Renewed Emphasis on Curing HIV

The past year saw a [renewed emphasis on curing HIV](#), with a growing number of researchers suggesting that a functional cure that allows HIV positive people to remain healthy without antiretroviral therapy --

and perhaps even complete eradication of the virus - is more feasible than ever.

At the AIDS 2010 Conference held in Vienna last summer, Sharon Lewin from Monash University

outlined several reasons for devoting more effort to a cure, ranging from the detrimental effects of even low-level residual HIV in people on ART, to the unsustainable financial burden of universal

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Message from the Chair ...

about how this disease has altered your life. Only through the efforts of those who have experienced the effects of HIV/AIDS and the honest sharing of those experiences, will the younger generation or those who are negative, recognize that taking any form of medication is not an alternative! Educate them to stay negative by playing safe and staying healthy.

This is a life altering and debilitating disease, there is no cure at this time; just ways to cope with it and manage your newly challenged lifestyle.

Let's make 2011 the year that the rate of infection of HIV/AIDS reduces and continues through the next decade. Let's raise the volume of the dialogue and through public pressure force our governments to increase their funding for finding a cure.

May you all have a year of increased health, vitality and gratitude.

Sincerely,

David HoLung, Chair

VIPWAS



Renewed Emphasis on Curing HIV ...

long-term treatment. "I don't think we should accept that HIV is a chronic illness requiring life-long treatment," she said.

A preceding meeting sponsored by the International AIDS Society explored approaches currently under study, including agents such as histone deacetylase (HDAC) inhibitors that "flush out" latent HIV in resting CD4 cells.

Researchers are also looking at altering CD4 cells to make them resistant to HIV. [The "Berlin Patient"](#) -- a man who has now remained HIV-free for 4 years since receiving a bone marrow transplant from a donor with the natural CCR5-delta32 mutation -- provides proof-of-concept that deleting



CCR5 co-receptors might protect cells from viral entry. Studies are now underway using zinc finger gene therapy to alter CD4 cells directly. Paula Cannon and colleagues recently demonstrated in mice that removing CCR5 from blood producing stem cells that give rise to all white blood cells can potentially reconstitute an entire HIV-resistant immune system.

The AIDS Policy Project, [a new advocacy group](#), is pushing for more attention and funding for a cure, and the National Institutes of Health this year launched a new collaboration that will allocate \$8.5 million over 5 years to support such research.

For more info go to:

www.hivandhepatitis.com/recent/2010/1214_2010_b.html

www.aidspolicyproject.org

www.catie.ca/catieneews.nsf

www.hiv-reservoir.net

The Sunni Side

I would like give you my biggest warmest thank you for attending and enjoying yourselves, at the Annual Christmas dinner. Wish you all the best for this 2011 New Year.

After a brief interruption our newsletter is back, It will be circulated to keep our members informed of our activities, programs and news of HIV / HCV

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the previous board member Victor

C. for his time and effort with previous newsletters. It is with great pleasure I announce that Craig D. will be volunteering his time for the (NEW) newsletter on a monthly basis. After much consideration the Board has decided to change the name of the newsletter to **The Phoenix!** Like the mythical bird, we regularly seem to rise from the ashes.

We are in the process of planning new Positive Living Programs for both men and women. First we would like to implement an art therapy program. **ARTS for HAART** Therapy support group. This program will be taking effect on February 2, 2011 The Art Therapy program requires a special intake process. This will take place on Mondays and Wednesdays through the month of January at specific times. Please call us to reserve a half hour intake appointment with facilitators. We will then contact you as the day and time of your intake. The group will explore typical related needs and interests of the members. NO art experiences necessary.

Because many of our members use only a first initial in our membership list, it is difficult to determine gender and mail out the announcements. Because of that we will mail to all

active members so that they will be aware of the relevant program(s).

Member participation helps the viability of our society.

Thank you, and please remember – if there are any programs or activities that you would like us to implement, please contact me, the Programs Coordinator and Event Planner, I will be more than grateful to speak

with you and listen to your ideas and do my best to make them happen.

I hope you find these new program ideas interesting and we would love to see you participate! If you are not able to do so, we would still like to hear from you perhaps to update any information or simply let us know how you are doing or if there is anything you may need.

These new programs will also be listed on our website. If you have not yet done so, please check it out www.vpwas.com. Many changes have been made.

We are also looking for more volunteers for reception please feel free to contact me anytime.

Norman (Sunni) Tesluk,

Program Co-ordinator, Event Planner

101-1139 Yates Street

Victoria, BC

Ph: 250-382-7927

Cell: 250-888-2637



PROGRAMS

Schedule of Events

- **Wings** cheque pick-up
Monday, January 31, 2011
- **Art for HAART** intake Mondays and Wednesdays starting January 12, 2011

Mondays 11 to 1:30 pm
Wednesdays 9 to 11:00 am
- **Circle Group** Thursdays
- **Afternoon Matinee**, Tuesdays
- **Dinner and a Movie** *James Bay* *New Horizons* centre, Saturday, January 22, 5pm

Programs and Services

Treatment Library

Daily from the time we are open till closing. Our office has one of the most extensive and respected treatment information libraries in western Canada. Contact the office directly if you have any questions regarding your current treatment or any other possibilities. Don't forget, we also have information and contacts relating to co-infected HIV/HCV individuals and treatment options currently available.

Peer Support

One-on-one or group sessions daily from the time we are open till closing. Our 24 hour peer support and information line is also available by calling our main reception at 250-382-5311 or toll free at 1-877-382-7927 from anywhere out of the area.

Computer Access

Open for access during office hours. Monday to Friday, 10—4 pm.

The Healing Circle

A healing circle facilitated by Nicole Jackson from the Victoria Native Friendship Centre.

Every Thursday afternoon 1:30 p.m.

DEPRESSION AND HIV

WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Depression is a mood disorder. It is more than sadness or grief. Depression is sadness or grief that is more intense and lasts longer than it should. It has various causes:

- events in your daily life
- chemical changes in the brain
- a side effect of medications
- several physical disorders

About 5% to 10% of the general population gets depressed. However, rates of depression in people with HIV are as high as 60%. Women with HIV are twice as likely as men to be depressed.

Being depressed is **not** a sign of weakness. It doesn't mean you're going crazy. You cannot "just get over it." Don't expect to be depressed because you are dealing with HIV. And don't think that you have to be depressed because you have HIV.

IS DEPRESSION IMPORTANT?

Depression can lead people to miss doses of their medication. It can increase high-risk behaviors that transmit HIV infection to others. Depression might cause some latent viral infections to become active. Overall, depression can make HIV disease progress faster. It also interferes with your ability to enjoy life.

Depression often gets overlooked. Also, many HIV specialists have not been trained to recognize depression. Depression can also be mistaken for signs of advancing HIV.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF DEPRESSION?

Symptoms of depression vary from person to person. Most health care providers suspect depression if patients report feeling blue or having very little interest in daily activities. If these feelings go on for two weeks or longer, and the patient also has some of the following symptoms, they are probably depressed:

- Fatigue or feeling slow and sluggish
- Problems concentrating
- Low sex drive
- Problems sleeping: waking very early, or excessive sleeping
- Feeling guilty, worthless, or hopeless
- Decreased appetite or weight loss
- Overeating

WHAT CAUSES DEPRESSION?

Some medications used to treat HIV can cause or worsen depression, especially efavirenz (Sustiva). Diseases such as anemia or diabetes can cause symptoms that look like depression. So can drug use, or low levels of testosterone, vitamin B6, or vitamin B12.

People who are infected with both HIV and hepatitis (see fact sheet 506) are more likely to be depressed, especially if they are being treated with interferon.

Other risk factors include:

- Being female
- Having a personal or family history of mental illness, alcohol and substance abuse
- Not having enough social support
- Not telling others you are HIV-positive
- Treatment failure (HIV or other)

TREATMENT FOR DEPRESSION

Depression can be treated with lifestyle changes, alternative therapies, and/or with medications. Many medications and therapies for depression can interfere with your HIV treatment. Your health care provider can help you select the therapy or combination of therapies most appropriate for you. **Do not try to self-medicate with alcohol or recreational drugs**, as these can increase depression and create additional problems.

Lifestyle changes can improve depression for some people. These include:

- Regular exercise
- Increased exposure to sunlight
- Stress management
- Counseling
- Improved sleep habits

Alternative therapies

Some people get good results from massage, acupuncture, or exercise. St. John's Wort is widely used to treat depression. However, it interferes with some HIV medications. Fact Sheet 729 has more about St. John's Wort. **Be sure to tell your health care provider if you are taking St. John's Wort.**

Valerian or Melatonin may help improve your sleep. Supplements of vitamins B6 or B12 can help if you have a shortage.

Antidepressants

Some people with depression respond best to medication. Antidepressants can interact with ARVs. They must be used under the supervision of a health care provider who is familiar with your HIV treatment. Protease inhibitors have many interactions with antidepressants.

The most common antidepressants used are **Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors, called SSRIs**. They can cause loss of sexual desire and function, lack of appetite, headache, insomnia, fatigue, upset stomach, diarrhea, and restlessness or anxiety.

The **tricyclics** have more side effects than the SSRIs. They can also cause sedation, constipation, and erratic heart beat.

Some health care providers also use **psychostimulants**, the drugs used to treat attention deficit disorder.

A recent study showed that treatment with dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA) can reduce depression in some HIV patients.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Depression is a very common condition for people with HIV. Untreated depression can cause you to miss medication doses and lower your quality of life.

Depression is a "whole body" issue that can interfere with your physical health, thinking, feeling, and behavior.

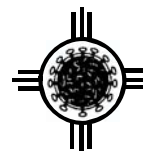
The earlier you contact your health care provider, the sooner you can both plan an appropriate strategy for dealing with this very real health issue.

Revised October 17, 2010

Reprinted from **AIDS InfoNet**

Fact Sheet Number 558

www.aidsinfonet.org



Laughter Can Be Therapeutic

As adults, we laugh about 15 times a day. Sounds pretty joyful - until you find out that children laugh about 400 times in a 24-hour go-round. That's a pretty big giggle gap!

As it turns out, laughter provides health benefits that are nothing to snicker at.

Laughing may reduce stress

You know how a good laugh can feel like an escape? Well, laughter actually has the power to stop the body's stress response in its tracks. In a small study, Dr. Lee Berk (an immunologist who has investigated laughter's benefits since the 1970s) found that real, "mirthful" laughter could slash stress hormone levels. And since stress hormones can suppress our immune system, laughter may be a way to protect our body's best defenses.

Basically, laughing feels good. While it may not be the best medicine, wouldn't you take it anyway?

Laughing may support a healthy heart

Ever heard of laughter yoga? If you haven't, take this to heart: After just seven sessions of laughter yoga, many research participants in one study saw a significant reduction in their blood pressure. Each 20- to 30-minute session consisted of 45-second rounds of simulated laughter followed by deep breathing and gentle stretching exercises.

Another study noted that people with heart disease seemed to be more angry and hostile and less likely to laugh during everyday life. Perhaps the heart-healthy benefit of laughter comes not from just the physical act, but also from a light-hearted, laugh-it-off attitude?

Laughing may sharpen our minds

A Marquette University psychologist had people read a list of words, and then showed some participants a funny video clip. A week later, those who had the chance to chuckle at the clip recalled 20 percent more words than those who hadn't. It's thought that the rush of laughter speeds up the heartbeat and sends more oxygen to the brain, which could boost memory skills.



Laughter can be therapeutic

Many cancer patients try humour therapy as a way to help them cope with their treatment. And children who laugh during painful medical procedures may be able to tolerate pain better.

Laughter yoga, mentioned above, has also caught on. More than 5,000 laughter yoga clubs have opened around the world. Dr. Madan Kataria, founder of laughter yoga, notes that while the laughter in his sessions may start off phony, "when we have eye contact with others, this laughter becomes real and contagious." Kataria contends that laughter yoga strengthens the abdominals and has positive effects on the digestive, circulatory and respiratory systems.

Laughter can be a form of exercise

When we laugh, our heart beats faster. Our blood flow also increases - about as much as it would during light exercise or after taking cholesterol-lowering medications. It's been estimated that 20 seconds of laughter equals about 3 minutes on the rowing machine. But even the best, biggest belly laugh session can't replace a good run on the treadmill, so think of hearty laughter more like a really light, brief aerobic workout.



Sunni vs Santa at the VIPWAS Christmas dinner

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Vancouver Island PWA Society

**Visit us at
www.vpwas.com**

CALLING ALL POSITIVE WOMEN IN B.C.

ViVA

ViVA is an advocacy and peer-support network created by and for HIV positive women.

We welcome and encourage ALL positive women in B.C to participate.

We have a listserv (confidential group e-mail list) that we utilize to communicate between positive women across the province.

If you are interested in being on the ViVA listserv simply e-mail vivabc@shaw.ca and/or call Margarite toll free at 1.866.482.3445.

Sponsors and Supporters



Vancouver Island PWA Society is grateful to our many generous private donors, corporate and community sponsors



We would also like to thank the many private individual anonymous donors who have contributed funds and gifts.



The PHOENIX is a publication of the Vancouver Island Persons with HIV/AIDS Society. **VIPWAS** is a peer-driven non-profit organization run by and for people living with HIV and people co-infected with HCV.

We welcome your input, ideas and involvement.

Contact the office for more information about programs and services.

250-382-7927, or drop in at 1139 Yates Street (in the Lalli Care Clinic Building) or email: support@vpwas.com or visit Web: <http://www.vpwas.com/>



January 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4 Peer Support	5	6 Peer Support Circle Group	7	8
9	10	11 Peer Support	12	13 Peer Support Circle Group	14	15
16	17 Intake Art Therapy 11 to 1:30 pm	18 Peer Support Afternoon Matinee	19 Intake Art Therapy 9 to 11 am	20 Peer Support Circle Group	21	22 Dinner and a Movie New Horizon Centre 5pm
23	24 Intake Art Therapy 11 to 1:30 pm	25 Peer Support Afternoon Matinee	26 Intake Art Therapy 9 to 11 am	27 Peer Support Circle Group	28	29
30	31 Intake Art Therapy 11 to 1:30 pm	February 1 Peer Support Afternoon Matinee	February 2 ARTS for HAART 6 to 8:30pm			