

In the past decade 40 million people have become infected with HIV

# Jon's *View*

March 2005

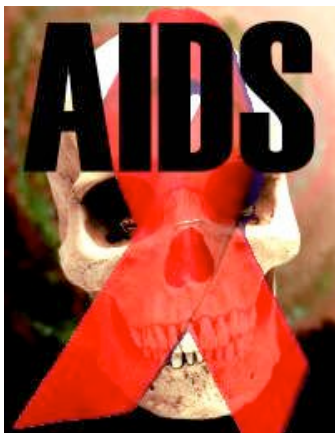
60,000 people die per week of AIDS-related illnesses



## New strain of HIV detected in New York

*Once again I would like to thank everyone who responded to my article last month on the tsunami. I have a few people who are collecting funds for the relief aid and if you would like to send a donation, please email me and I will give you the names of the organizations that are coordinating this outstanding effort.*

The topic I have chosen to talk about this month is something that is very much in the forefront of our lives everyday, but like everything else that has been around for so long we tend to forget or get blasé to hearing anything new about this disease. I am referring to the new strain of HIV that has been detected in New York. They have found a man who tested negative only a short time ago and now has the virus that would normally have taken 10 years to develop. I have been around since the very beginning of this virus, even before it had a name and was taking my brothers down faster than we knew what was hitting them. Since that fateful time back in the early 80's people were doing anything and everything they could to try and find out what was spreading this disease and how to avoid getting it at all costs. Some of us remember when Ryan White was banned from swimming in the public pool and the city drained it and gave the pool a chlorine washing before they would reopen the pool to the public. Since then we have come a long, long way to understanding how you can protect yourself

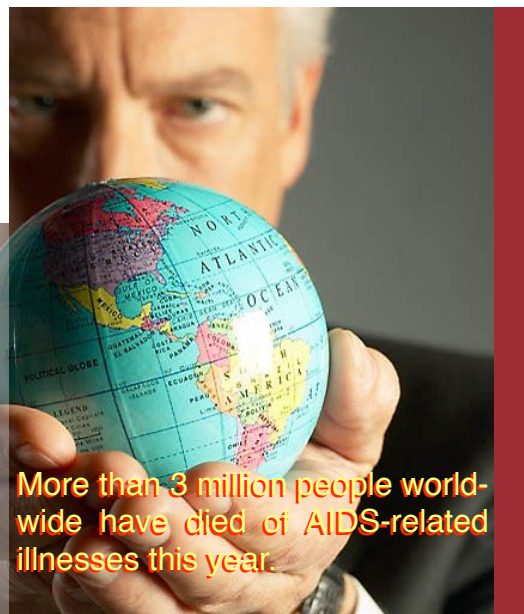


from getting the HIV virus, and if you do end up with it, what it takes to survive on the medications that one has to take. There is no easy way around this topic now as we know way too much and have the

education and past to correct what some people had no choice in. By saying that, I still have to say that just knowing how you can catch the virus or how it is transmitted is NOT the answer to ridding our community of this disease. We have known for many years now how bad smoking is for us yet you look at all the people who START smoking knowing that they are headed

down a path of pain and discomfort sometime down the road. This is the same thing we are seeing today in not only the gay community but all the different walks of life with regard to HIV. The eye

opening chat rooms that I have been in with young men looking for a "CHARGED LOAD" or looking for someone who is positive to have sex with is unreal. These people have many different reasons for their behavior but I still marvel at their thought process as to what the end result would be. The biggest concern I can see is that they are for one mis-informed as to what it is like when you are positive and second that just taking a few pills will be your cure all. I know many people who are depressed and couldn't care less about their future and must admit I have been in that space in my life from time to time also. I had been around the worse this disease could produce yet after a 21 year relationship that went south I too got to the point where I did



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# Invest in preventing AIDS - DONATE

*I would like to invite all of you to send me your story, and I would be glad to post it here for all our readers to read. And, just maybe save someone from having to live with this terrible disease.*

not care or even think there was a future so I now have to live with my mistake for the rest of my life. I would just like to ask each person out there who is practicing unsafe sex a few questions before they make up their mind that even if they were to get the virus, all would be OK. One of the first things one feels when they are told they are positive is that you no longer live on this earth without some sort of medical pills and shots to keep you alive. Second your mind does not go down the same path as it was when you were clean and negative. It is a feeling no matter how long you stand in the shower you will never be CLEAN again. You quickly learn that any new virus or disease is a much bigger threat to your well being and you need to take much better care of yourself now than before. Third, when your virus does take off and your T-cells drop to a dangerous level your next move is to start on the medications known as the "cocktail." Some people have very few side effects and some get very ill from them. You never can be without your meds at any time and your blood work is done every month in the beginning with 14 - 17 vials of blood taken each time for your lab work. It just makes me so angry when you pick up one of the gay papers and see the advertisements for the HIV meds and it is all people standing on top of some mountain loving life without a care in the world. When I think they should show the person taking there meds then have to eat so

they don't toss them back up and hope there are NO side effects like a lot of people do get.

The worst thing I think we can do is to point a finger at anyone who is not living this pure lifestyle of safe sex or no sex at all, but to keep our mouths shut and watch one person after another head down this road of no return and then have them say this is not what I thought was going to happen. I go to schools and talk about this virus to as many who let me and not one time have I come away without letting someone know their information was incorrect and they needed to spend some time with someone who is positive before deciding that is what you think would be OK for you. Some of the comments I have herd is that "I MIGHT AS WELL GET IT NOW AND SAVE MYSELF THE AGONY OF WONDERING IF I HAVE IT" or "I WOULD NOT HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT SAFE SEX AND NOT HAVE TO USE A CONDOM AGAIN" some have thought that by getting the virus they would belong to a special club for poz people only, and they just want to belong to anything and be a part of. These are just a few of the ideas that are out there today and we are just letting it go by without taking a stand and screaming YOU ARE WRONG!

## How safe is safe?



*Some of the questions I get are how do you know if you can have safe sex or not - or if the person is CLEAN. You do not have that option. If a person just got tested and was told they did not carry the HIV virus this does not include their past three months of activity. When you ask a person if they are clean or "neg." they may think they are telling you the truth but they do not even know and by then it is too late. The best rule of thumb to go by is think that everyone, no matter how well you think you know them are positive. Even if they are not you are still safe and do not have to worry about them telling you the truth or not.*

## *I realize this is a very HOT topic,*

*especially when you talk about people's sex lives - you never know how much is truth - how much is fabricated. I would like to put the topic out there for discussion, and hear back as to what your method is for handling this tragic disease. Like I said before, this is NOT intended to point fingers, I just want to be sure that everyone has all the correct information before they head off into a world full of wrong information.*



**Thank you for your time. Be safe in all areas of your life.**



When you are first diagnosed with the HIV virus you will have your blood work done to see what strain of the virus you have contacted. They are looking to see what type of strain you have, is it full blown or if the person had been on medication. When you are told that NOT the person who infected you but the person who infected that person was already on medication and here is what they were taking, your mind cannot comprehend how they know that, never mind how it will effect your recovery. You also may NOT take any of those medications as your body has already figured a way to get around them.

Jon & Champ - March 2005