



HIV + Aging Research Project | PS

NEWSLETTER

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SAVE the DATE

**POSITIVELY
AGING**project



9/23/23

8th Annual Positively Aging Conference Body Mind and Soul



Featuring Keynote Speaker - Peter Staley

Long Term AIDS & Gay Rights Activist
at the Mizell Center, Palm Springs

Positively Aging Project, the annual Coachella Valley conference aimed at providing practical information and inspiration for those living long-term with HIV, will bring together community leaders to improve the lives of older adults living with HIV for a hybrid in-person and virtual conference on September 23, 2023, at the Mizell Center in Palm Springs. More details to come!

In This Issue...

Page 1

Save The Date -Positively Aging Project Conference, featuring Peter Staley as keynote speaker.

Page 2

Isolation and Loneliness in Long Term Survivors Aging with HIV by Jill Gover, Ph.D

Page 3

Research Update from 2023 CROI Conference
by Golkoo Morcos, PharmD, AAHIVP Chief Medical Officer, BIOS Clinical Research

Page 4

Welcome to our Newest Board Member Ted Guice
&
Exercise and Aging with HIV
by Ted Guice, Certified Fitness Trainer, Senior Exercise Specialist

Page 6

We are Here for You! Can You Be There for us?
by Steven Drew Auerbach
HARP-PS COO & Director of Business Development

Page 7

Lessons on Supporting LGBTQ+ Individuals to Live Their Truth
by Steve Rosetti, M.S. LCPC, CADC

Page 8

Upcoming Events



Jill Gover, Ph.D.,
HARP-PS Board Member

Isolation and Loneliness in Long Term Survivors Aging with HIV

As we enter the fifth decade of the AIDS pandemic, long-term survivors aging with HIV are facing a new challenge: the deleterious mental and physical health effects of isolation. At a time when we have HIV medications that prolong life, many long term survivors feel forgotten and abandoned and their mental health suffers.

LTS have good reasons for isolating. Many lost an entire social circle of friends to AIDS at a time when it was not developmentally appropriate. For young adults that was very traumatic, and as a result those premature losses now make it tough to reach out to form new meaningful connections. In general it's more difficult to form new relationships as we age, but given the history of multiple losses, and unprocessed grief it's even more of a challenge for LTS.

Gay men were ostracized, stigmatized, and blamed for the pandemic, and many internalized that stigma. They faced societal indifference, stigma, and rejection by families at the same time that they were facing their own impending deaths. This was a traumatic time that has left scars.

ACRIA's, a global authority on HIV and aging, groundbreaking 2005 Research on Older Adults with HIV (ROAH) study found high levels of isolation and loneliness. When ROAH 2.0 was done in 2018, 43% reported feeling "lonely" or "very lonely".

ROAH found that 70% of survivors live alone, compared with only 30% of the general population. Many studies link isolation and loneliness to an increased risk of stroke, heart disease, high blood pressure, and earlier onset of dementia. Isolation increases stress hormones and inflammation. In people with HIV (who already have high levels of inflammation), the risks from these are much greater. One study stated, "Feeling isolated may be as bad for a person's health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day."

What can you do to fight isolation and loneliness?

The Power of Intentional Socializing:

Join a club, meet up, engage in a fun activity that is shared with others.

The Power of Empathy:

Put yourself in someone else's shoes and join with them. Contact someone and plan a "date". Force yourself to plan events. Focus on how you feel after the event, not how you feel before you do it.

Remember, depression will tell you that what you're doing is pointless. It will heighten your loneliness and lead to more isolating behavior. Do what you need to do anyway and focus on the outcome instead of on your feelings in the moment.

There are also different types of loneliness, which may require different interventions: emotional loneliness and social loneliness. Emotional loneliness is the absence of a significant other with whom a close attachment is formed (a partner or close friend). In order to reduce this type of loneliness we need quality relationships. One or two people who really "get you", who see you for who you are and support you. Social loneliness is the lack of a wider social network of friends, neighbors or colleagues. We need to engage in more shared activities with others to build the network of support that reduces social loneliness.

I challenge everyone reading this today to reach out to one long-term survivor you know, and acknowledge that that person's story of survival is epic, awesome, and worthy of respect. They — we — need all the support and love we can muster. Connection and community are the antidote to loneliness and isolation.



"Until now, I never understood why you got so excited when someone walked past the house."



Golkoo Morcos
PharmD, AAHIVP
Chief Medical Officer, BIOS
Clinical Research

Research Update from 2023 CROI Conference

CROI, the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections, welcomed over 5,000 attendees in a virtual and live platform this year. In an effort to stay true to the science, the CROI forum is notorious for making registration exclusive to scientists and researchers only (they do an extensive background check on applicants) and closing its doors to the Pharma Industry.

I was fortunate to attend this year, and the conference venue in Seattle was upgraded to a modern, aesthetically pleasing hall with beautiful natural wood finishes (so new you could still smell the paint job). They even had live musicians playing what seemed like rainy-day-music in the lobby – pretty cool – and the conference organizers gifted the attendees the highly sought-after “CROI backpacks” with a giant green retrovirus embroidered on the zip-pocket and all.

Now, on to the important stuff – a summary review of what I felt were some key research presentations from the conference.

- **Phase 2 study NCT05729568** – Broadly neutralizing antibodies (bNAb)s teropavimab and zinlirvimab together with lenacapavir sustained viral suppression for 6 months in 19 out of 20 participants living with HIV. Study requirements included resistance testing to rule out baseline resistance to the bNAb)s.
- **Clinical Development of Islatravir (ISL) has Resumed.** Previously it was found that ISL causes dose-related drops in lymphocytes, however this resolves over several months. The new (much lower) doses of ISL moving forward in clinical trials are 0.25mg daily or 2mg weekly.
- **Solar Study** – switching from B/F/TAF (Biktarvy) to every 2 months long-acting injectable CAB/RPV (Cabenuva) was efficacious in maintaining viral suppression at 12 months. It did not, however, lead to weight loss. This disproves the belief that removing TAF from a regimen might reverse TAF associated weight gain.
- **RESPOND Cohort** – International cohort (n=33,598) from 2012-2019 demonstrated a one-third drop in mortality, regardless of cause. The leading cause of death was found to be non-AIDS-related cancers. HIV related factors that were strongest predictors of death were CD4 <350 and RNA >200.
- **UCSF Ward 86 Cohort** – In an off-label use of CAB/RPV (Cabenuva) for patients with uncontrolled viremia, high rates of virologic suppression were achieved. Randomized controlled trials should be done to investigate this further.
- **Swiss HIV Cohort** – When baseline disease factors are controlled for, integrase-inhibitor-based regimens are not associated with elevated cardiovascular risk. This contrasts with data from the RESPOND cohort consortium in 2022, that showed associations between integrase inhibitors and cardiovascular disease in PLHIV.
- **DTG and Fat** - In vitro model showed that dolutegravir disrupted estrogen-mediated fat differentiation. Questions arose as to whether this could explain greater weight gain on INSTIs for women than men.
- **DoxyPEP (doxycycline post-exposure prophylaxis) and a separate study with Meningococcal B vaccine (4CMenB)** reduced the incidence of syphilis, chlamydia, and gonorrhea in MSM who use PrEP. This is the third study showing favorable results for DoxyPEP in STI prevention.
- **Mpox in PLHIV** who have CD4 below 100 resulted in mortality of 27%. This highlights that it is extremely important for people living with advanced HIV to be vaccinated for Mpox.

*****BIOS IS LOOKING FOR PARTICIPANTS FOR THE FOLLOWING STUDY*****

Study to Compare Bictegravir/Lenacapavir Versus Current Therapy in People With HIV-1 Who Are Successfully Treated With a Complicated Regimen (Artistry 1)

To participate in this study and for more information

CLICK HERE: [_https://www.biosclinicalresearch.com/clinicaltrials_](https://www.biosclinicalresearch.com/clinicaltrials)



Ted Guice

Certified in Fitness Trainer,
Senior Exercise Specialist
HARP-PS Board Member

Welcome to our Newest Board Member Ted Guice!

Ted Guice has been a Personal Fitness Trainer and Group Exercise Instructor for over 35 years. Since 2006, he has called Palm Springs his home. Originally certified as a trainer and instructor at Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, Ted is also certified as a Senior Fitness Trainer for the last 15 years. At 65 years old, Ted understands the unique and challenging aspects of healthy aging, senior exercise requirements, and the mental/emotional, and social benefits of exercise for those aging with HIV such as himself.

In 2010 Ted created a high/low impact aerobic and weight resistance training class, "G-Force Workout". During the COVID-19 Pandemic Ted took his class outdoors thereby allowing folks to exercise and be together during a time of social isolation bringing

together over one hundred people for fun, fitness and friendship. The morning class in Ruth Hardy Park has become a mainstay to the community ever since.

Focusing on senior fitness, Ted has presented to the Palm Springs Rotary Club and the Palm Springs Women's Club. He has eagerly donated his time to several city events including the Mayors Fun Run, The AIDS Walk, the Palm Springs Health Run and Wellness Festival, Hanson House, The Trevor Project, and as an ambassador to HARP-PS' AIDS Walk team, "Team Thrive". Through his radio program, "A GOOD FIT" at iHubRadio.com, Ted was able to feature and give exposure to several community organizations, including HARP-PS, Eisenhower Health, and DAP Health.

Giving back to the Palm Springs community and the people who have so generously given to him, is Ted's most earnest desire and wish. Outside of work, he spends his days enjoying the Palm Springs weather and culture, loving on his American Pocket Bully, Loki, baking, and producing content for his free YouTube channel about senior fitness.

We are thrilled to welcome this pillar of our community to the HARP-PS board!

Exercise and Aging with HIV By Ted Guice

Most of us are aware of the benefits of regular exercise. Everyone can experience the health benefits of physical activity – age, abilities, ethnicity, shape, or size do not matter. These benefits include the following:

- Improves your memory and brain function (all age groups).
- Protects against many chronic diseases.
- Aids in weight management.
- Lowers blood pressure and improves heart health.
- Improves your quality of sleep.
- Reduces feelings of anxiety and depression.
- Combats cancer-related fatigue.
- Improves joint pain and stiffness.
- Maintains muscle strength and balance.
- Increases life span.

What about an aging population living with HIV? Are the benefits of regular exercise the same? Absolutely - and then some!

As an adult male living with HIV for over 43 years, my experience is that regular cardiovascular and strength training have significantly improved, and possibly extended my life. I've been taking HIV medications since September of 2001, I have experienced many of the common side effects that come with HIV and antiretroviral therapy (ART).

Continued on page 5

Exercise and Aging with HIV - Continued

At 65 years old, I've also experienced many of the side effects of just plain old getting old! Determining which effect is brought on by HIV, aging, or both has been an exercise in futility. But I can say that the health benefits of regular daily exercise have vastly improved the quality of my life.

"I can say that the health benefits of regular daily exercise have vastly improved the quality of my life."

Here's what I know are the benefits to me as opposed to my older, HIV+ counterparts (or anyone, for that matter) who do not exercise:

- I'm sick less often and for shorter durations
- My weight and body mass index are in check.
- My daily outlook on life is better.
- I have increased strength.
- I maintain muscle mass more easily.
- I am more connected socially.
- My bloodwork is better.
- My risk of disease and chronic illness is less.
- I sleep better.
- My daily energy level is better.
- My cognition is better.
- My endurance is better.

These are just some of the benefits I have experienced as an older man living with HIV. The benefits to women may be even greater, as regular exercise helps prevent bone loss and osteoporosis - a real time problem for our sisters coping with HIV and aging.

It does not matter how old you are or what physical shape you are currently in. Start slowly. Do one good thing for yourself every day, and then build on it. Starting an exercise program today, whether it's a walk around the block or an hour lifting weights at the gym is the BEST investment you can make in yourself! I see the benefits firsthand in my work as a Personal Fitness Trainer and Group Exercise Instructor for folks over 50. They feel better. They look better. They are better!

I'm right here in the middle of the boat with you. I believe we are here to thrive and to help the next generation of our HIV+ community and family do the same. My desire is to help you live your healthiest, happiest, and your most robust life going forward!

P.S. For more information regarding the benefits of exercise and HIV, refer to this paper from the National Institute of Health .

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6124952/>





Steven Drew Auerbach
*HARP-PS COO & Director of
Business Development*

We are Here for You! Can You Be There for Us?

In 2001, only 17 percent of Americans living with HIV were 50 years of age or older. By 2009 that number had nearly doubled to 33% percent. Today, over 50% of all Americans living with HIV are 50 years of age or older. That number is expected to increase to 75% by 2030.

In early 2015, a group of physicians, researchers, activists, and HIV+ individuals began meeting to create an organization to study long-term HIV positive individuals and determine how to help them live longer, healthier lives. That year the HIV+ Aging Research Project was formed.

Over the past 8 years HARP-PS has:

- Conducted monthly provider education programs for our HIV treatment providers to learn and share knowledge about how to provide care to our aging HIV population
- Spearheaded multiple, vital, research studies in partnership with major universities throughout the states and across the country.
- Created educational programs to engage and educate our growing, aging community including 2 yearly symposiums and our monthly Positive Life Series in partnership with the Palm Springs Cultural Center.

2023/2024

In addition to expanding our education programs and research initiatives, our largest initiative is to operationalize our “Virtual Village” - an online/mobile application like other social web/mobile based applications into a local (and eventually national) service to combat loneliness, isolation, and PTSD in our long-term survivor population. This initiative is the result of vital information we gathered through a two-year research study we conducted in partnership with UCR, USC, and University of Florida, Tampa.

We Need Your Help! **DONATE HERE**

Currently, our primary source of income is via local, state, and federal grants, all of which only allow a very small percentage to support the administration and growth of our organization.

You can help us continue the vital services we have been providing for 8 years by making a one-time or ideally, monthly donation to HARP-PS – **NO AMOUNT IS TOO SMALL!** We also encourage you to consider us a benefactor in your estate planning, hosting a fundraising event, contributing to one of our monthly/yearly symposiums. Additionally, you can assist us by becoming a Community Business Sponsor! Of course, the donation of your time as a volunteer is also greatly appreciated! We always need additional hands at our events and fundraising initiatives!

Will you assist us in our ongoing mission to “*Improve the lives of the large and growing population of long-term HIV and AIDS survivors by studying the impacts of long-term HIV disease and its treatments on the natural aging process*”?

For more information about how you can help, please contact Steven Drew Auerbach at Steven.Drew@HARP-PS.org

DONATE HERE





Steve Rosetti
M.S. LCPC, CADC
HARP-PS Board of Directors

Lessons on Supporting LGBTQ+ Individuals to Live Their Truth

As a gay man of “a certain age”, I recognize that coming out is rarely easy and I feel a certain responsibility to understand and support those that struggle through their coming out process when sought to do so. Coming out is not typically a single event or episode, and then it’s over. More often it is a series of experiences, some that continue for a lifetime. Telling your family can be risky (hint: never, EVER do it at a family celebration). Coming out at work carries a double risk—rejection or termination. Revealing yourself to friends is generally easier; these are people who already like you and carry fewer judgements and prejudices than the general public.

Many things can help or hinder the path to living a happy, authentic life. Variables like age, generational differences, family structure, ethnicity, religion, location, education, and socio-economic factors can all influence how, when and to whom to tell.

Coming out can be even more complicated for what I call the “situational queer”—open to some, closeted to others as it involves being candid and authentic to a chosen few and lying to the rest.

Why does this awkward duality occur to so many queer people? I believe, as a therapist, we are taught, conditioned, and influenced to value ourselves according to hetero-centric models of identity and morality. To cope with this, we often employ the “pause affect”, a careful calculation about how people will react to our profound declaration of our true selves.

Regardless of when you “come out” whether in your 20’s or come out in your 80’s LGBTQ+ individuals, like all people are affected by arbitrary beliefs and values that are imposed on them such as negative stereotypes and toxic rhetoric. These challenges can have great effect on their self-esteem and defining their identity and place in the larger society. This is why many in the queer community are relegated to enclaves of like-minded and safe comrades.

"Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness." - Desmond TuTu

Being true to who they are in the context of society as a whole creates reactions from hesitant trepidation to raw fear. But it does something worse—it denies them a meaningful and proud place in the world.

I believe the first step in supporting a person to live happy and guiltless lives is to understand societal dynamics and to help them examine the false beliefs imposed upon the LGBTQ+ community. Historically, queer people have withheld the crucial truth of who they are out of shame and guilt. But this truth is the only path to a self-accepting life.

Here are the top five steps I believe all queer people, regardless of age need to adopt to start their journey forward:

1. Learning to love yourself
2. Choosing people who love and support you unconditionally
3. Finding your “tribe”, it’s a place of belonging and acceptance
4. Imagining the life that you want—then go for it!
5. Challenging your negative scripts

And, most importantly, be present as a friend and mentor.

"As You Think, so shall You Become" – Bruce Lee



Positive Life Series
HIV Education Program



HIV + Aging Research Project | PS

Upcoming Events!
at the
The Palm Springs Cultural Center

May 2, 2023, 6:00 PM

*Neurological Complications of HIV with Speaker: Dr. Howard Aronow
Neurologist, DAP Health & Private Practice*

June 6, 2023, 6:00 PM

*STI's & Meningitis B Vaccine for Gonorrhea with Speakers:
Dr. Phyllis Ritchie - PS Test
Trent Broadus, NP - DAP Health*

July and August

No Event - Summer Break

To register for in person attendance please follow the link for each event at:
<https://www.harp-ps.org/upcoming-events>

Or register to attend via Zoom by following the link for each event at:
<https://www.harp-ps.org/upcoming-events>

A Very Special Thank You To Our Volunteers!

Ken Vergonet – Social Media & Webmaster Extraordinaire

Jim Ferguson – Layout of Newsletter & Brochure, administration, and all around good guy!

*Chad Sain – Volunteer Photographer (Chad Sain Photography) a great person, artist, and friend
to HARP-PS*