



Positive Women

Positive News



April 2009

Women's Retreat

29 May–1 June 2009



BOOK NOW

**For registration form
Free phone 0800 769 848 or
email positivewomen@xtra.co.nz**

Coordinators Update

Tena Koutou Katoa, Jambo, Hello, Talofa lava, Taloha ni, Halo olaketa, Bula vinaka, Kam wa mai, La orana, Fakaalofa, Lahi atu, Malo lelei, Nabat, Zdravo, Ciao, Shalom, Saludo, Bonjour, Aman, Servus, Konnichi wa, Buenos Días, Nyob zoo, Torova, Namaste, Ci yi bak, Salaama.

It's April already and a busy few months ahead for Positive Women Inc. what with Easter, the Digital Story Telling work shop, Board Meeting, AGM and then the Women's Retreat in May. Lots of great stuff happening.

Funding continues to be a concern but so far we are managing to hang in. While some projects may need to go on hold for the time being most of the scheduled events as mentioned above will still continue. We only got three responses in regards the Couples Retreat so not sure if that indicates a lack of interest or that people have not had time to respond?

Planning is already in place to hold another amazing Fashion Show later in the year which is looking to be even bigger and better than last year.

In this issue of Positively Positive we summarise HIV and AIDS Statistics for 2008 on pages 4 & 5 which indicate the highest number ever of HIV diagnoses or notifications.

On pages 6 & 7 we are really excited to announce the launch of the New Zealand version of "Treat Yourself Right". A wonderful information booklet for women living with HIV.

Retreat registrations are still open till the end of April so if you haven't booked yet and you want to come ,be sure to do so soon so that you don't

miss out.

We are also very appreciative to our new volunteer who will be working in the office a few days a week and helping out with arrangements for the retreat.

Wishing you all a very happy Easter and a wonderful autumn.

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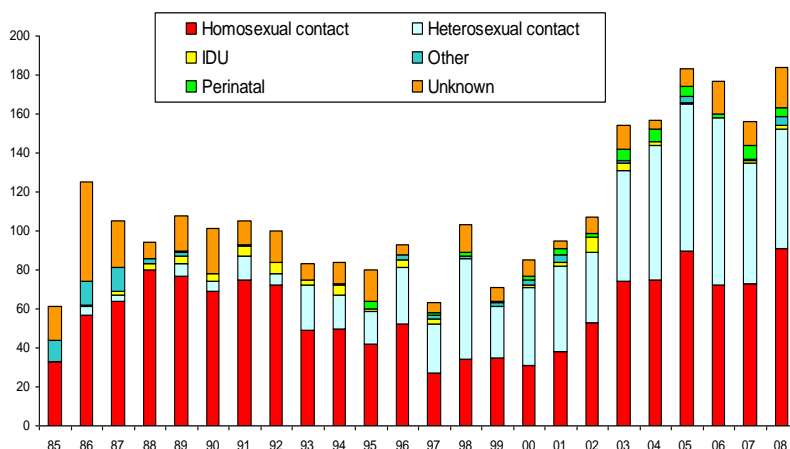


2008 New Zealand HIV Statistics...

There were a total of **227** new cases of HIV notified either through antibody or viral load testing in New Zealand during 2008 .

Of these:

- **184** people were diagnosed through **antibody testing**, the highest number ever diagnosed in one year. Of these, 91 were men infected through sex with other men, 61 through heterosexual contact (39 men and 22 women), 2 through injecting drug use, 2 through a transfusion (overseas), 4 were children infected through mother-to-child transmission (3 overseas and 1 in New Zealand), 3 people had other means of infection and for 21 people the means of infection was unknown or unreported.
- **43** people with HIV infection were reported through **viral load testing** . It is presumed these were mostly people who have previously been diagnosed overseas. 25 were men infected through sex with other men, 3 through heterosexual contact and for 15 people the means of infection was unknown or unreported.
- Summary of the 227 new HIV notifications
 - 116 were men who have sex with men
 - 79 were heterosexual
 - 4 were children
 - 28 were unknown (or unreported)



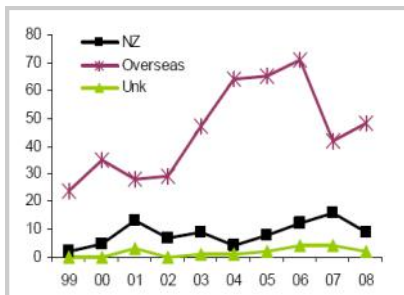
Number of people diagnosed with HIV in New Zealand through antibody testing by year of diagnoses* and means of infection.

*infection might have occurred some time before diagnoses.

Trends in new HIV diagnoses....

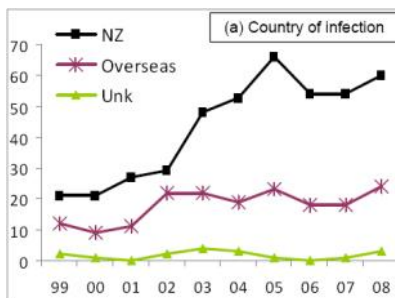
The number of people diagnosed with HIV infected through heterosexual contact peaked in 2006 and while overall there have been a similar number of heterosexually infected men and women diagnosed, in 2008 there was a higher proportion of men, the reason for this is unknown.

The majority of people with heterosexually acquired HIV over the period from 1999-2008 were infected overseas (81%), which is in contrast to the



Heterosexual

situation with men who have sex with men where the majority of infections occur within New Zealand (70%).



Men who have sex with men

In most years over the past 10 years there have been more diagnoses of HIV among men who have sex with men in Auckland than the rest of the country. The commonest age group for HIV diagnoses during this period was 30-39 however since 2006 diagnoses have been most common among men aged 40-49.

There were **48** people notified with AIDS in 2008

Of these:

- 22 were men infected through sex with men
- 19 through heterosexual contact (14 men and 5 women)
- 2 through injecting drug use
- 1 through a transfusion (overseas)
- 2 were children infected through mother to child transmission overseas
- 2 unknown (or unreported)

Information is provided by the AIDS Epidemiology Group
Department of Preventive and Social Medicine, University of Otago Medical School
Dunedin, New Zealand

Treat Yourself Right ...

Positive Women Inc. is very excited to announce the launch of a new information booklet called 'Treat Yourself Right' which provides up-to-date information on health and well being for women living with HIV or AIDS.

"Treat Yourself Right" was originally produced by the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) and the Australian National Association of People living with HIV and AIDS (NAPWA). Permission was given by these organisations together with Positive Women Inc. Victoria for Positive Women Inc. (NZ) to adapt the booklet to fit a New Zealand context.

The booklet is primarily intended for women who have been newly diagnosed right through to those who have been living with HIV for many years. It may also be helpful for partners and friends and family members of women living with HIV.

A secondary target group for this resource may include those working in the field of HIV such as sexual health clinics, nurses, midwives, social workers and GP's working with HIV positive women. It may also prove to be a very useful education and awareness tool for people in general.

Some studies have suggested that HIV may affect women differently, possibly causing greater damage to the immune system at an earlier stage, though there are other studies which did not reach the same conclusions. However it has become more widely acknowledged that gender differences could make a significant impact on the natural history of HIV infection, affect-

ing treatment and the range of side effects experienced by women. There are also a number of issues specific to women, such as pregnancy, breast-feeding, cervical cancer and even menopause which highlight the need for a women specific information booklet.

The booklet was contextualised for New Zealand by four, third year nursing students from Auckland University who worked with Positive Women Inc. as part of their community service project.

The faces of four Positive Women Inc. members have been put on the front cover which was intended to give the booklet a real New Zealand identity and has intentionally been produced in a handy A5 size so that it can easily be popped into a handbag or the bedside draw.

Funding to produce the booklet was provided by the New Zealand Lottery Grants Board to whom we are very grateful. As a result of this funding we were able to cover the costs for design and printing over 10,000 copies. It also enables us to offer the booklet for free.

A PDFcopy will also be available from the Positive Women Inc. website by the end of April.

We hope you find the booklet useful and would appreciate your feedback.





Contact Positive Women Inc. to order your copy

PDF copy can be down loaded from the
Positive Women Inc. website
www.positivewomen.org.nz

Meeting the Ministers at the Big Gay Out



From left to right.: Karen Richie, Founder Cartier Bereavement Trust, John Key, Hon. Prime Minister of New Zealand and Jane Bruning National Coordinator Positive Women Inc. in the VIP tent at the Big Gay Out.

The Big Gay Out was held in Auckland on Sunday the 8th of February. The aims of the Big Gay Out were to build supportive and safe social environments for the gay, lesbian, bisexual, takatapui and transgendered communities, to reach a large audience with HIV prevention and health promotion messages, and to engage with the community.

This was Positive Women's second year at the Big Gay Out. This year we shared an tent with Body Positive Auckland where we provided information on HIV and AIDS for women and families.

The Big Gay Out is a fun day with many Auckland families taking the

opportunity of what was a sweltering hot day to roam around Coyle Park at Point Chevalier.

It was also a great opportunity to meet and speak with various ministers as can be seen by the photos. Both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Labour Party stopped by the tent for a chat and were interested to hear what is happening in the world of HIV. No one promised any funding however but it was a great PR exercise as well as a fun day out.

Thank you to the New Zealand AIDS foundation who made the day possible. Profiling of HIV in the community is always worthwhile and we were glad to have been able to participate.



From left to right: Bruce Kilmister, Body Positive and Jane Bruning, Positive Women Inc. in the 'Support' Tent at the Big Gay Out.



From left to right: Matt and Damien, Trustee of Cartier Bereavement Fund .Hon Phil Goff, Leader of the Labour Party, Jane Bruning, National Coordinator Positive Women Inc. and Karen Ritchie, Founder Cartier Bereavement Fund

Complaint

Positive Women Inc had a new and unfortunate experience of having some complaints regarding comments by a participant at the Family Hui in November 2008.

In response to this and in accordance with the Positive Women Inc. complaints procedures, the Board had in depth discussions around the issues and the resulting action has been that

the person concerned will not be invited to participate at the next Family Hui.

This decision was not taken lightly, but as Positive Women Inc. is primarily a support network for women and families living with HIV, it was felt this was the best option in order to continue that support and protect the wellbeing of our members.

Positive Women Inc. National Youth Road Show.....

Positive Women Inc. are very excited to announce an amazing initiative proposed by one of our members to do a National Youth Road Show in the summer of 2010.

This project is still in the very early planning stages at the moment but the aim of the campaign will be to get a vehicle which will travel the country stopping in towns to help raise awareness and education around HIV and AIDS to the youth of New Zealand.

We are currently working on partnerships with other youth focused organisations to work together with us and looking for sponsors to fund the campaign. So watch this space for more information.

If you would like to assist with sponsorship or make a donation towards the campaign please contact Positive Women Inc.



Smoking doesn't help...



Smoking weakens the immune system. It can make it harder to fight off HIV-related infections. This is especially true for infections related to the lungs. This is a risk for smoking marijuana as well as tobacco. Having HIV increases the risk of chronic lung disease.

Smoking can interfere with processing of medications by the liver. It can also worsen liver problems like hepatitis.



People with HIV who smoke are more likely to suffer complications from HIV medication than those who don't. For example, those who smoke are more

likely to experience nausea and vomiting from taking HIV medications.

Smoking increases the risk of some long-term side effects of HIV disease and treatment. These include osteoporosis (weak bones that can lead to fractures, HIV treatment slightly increases the risk of heart attack, but smoking is the major controllable risk factor for heart attacks or strokes.

Recent studies found that quitting smoking reduced heart attack risk in HIV patients more than other factors such as changes in medications.

Smoking and Opportunistic Infections

People with HIV disease who smoke are more likely to develop several opportunistic infections (see fact sheet 500) related to HIV. They are more likely to develop:

- thrush
- oral hairy leukoplakia (whitish mouth sores)
- bacterial pneumonia
- pneumocystis pneumonia

For women, smoking can increase the risk and severity of infection with human

papilloma virus. This increases the risk of cervical disease.

Talk with your health-care provider about how to stop smoking. You'll most likely be asked questions to help best determine the method that will work for you. You can also ask your doctor about a prescription for the nicotine patch to decrease cravings.

Tips to help you to stop smoking:

- Make the commitment. It's not about willpower. Get support.
- Change your daily routine. If you smoke with your coffee in the morning, change to tea or another beverage.
- Keep a logbook or diary of your smoking habits such as how you felt, the time of day, and what you were doing and review it with your health-care provider.
- Make rules. No smoking in the car, for one (and remove the ashtray and lighter), no smoking in the house, and buy only one pack at a time. Getting to the commitment is the hardest part. After accomplishing this feat, don't go it alone. Take advantage of help that's available.
- Do not try to quit when stress is already high. Actively use stress-reduction techniques to help you handle this period. Stress-reduction techniques include exercise, massage, safer sex and bubble baths.
- Drink lots of water and fruit juices or herbal tea to flush out your system.
- Reward yourself by reinvesting drug, alcohol, or cigarette money on healthy or favourite foods or relaxing activities.
- Deep breathing (while visualizing the toxins leaving your body as you exhale) can help send a powerful message to your immune system.

Bone marrow transplant cures HIVnot all that it seems

You may have heard of the recent case in Germany where a man was cured of HIV through a bone marrow transplant. While this was ground breaking news it is important to put this into context.

The case involved a man with both leukaemia and HIV, who received a specially engineered stem cell transplant aimed at both treating his cancer and making his new blood cells resistant to HIV infection. Two years later, the man has not taken anti-HIV drugs and his doctors have not found the virus in his blood.

The patient, an American man living in Germany, was given chemotherapy and radiation to ablate his blood cells. Then he received a bone marrow transplant of stem cells from a person who naturally had a genetic mutation that disrupts a protein called the CCR5 receptor. HIV uses this receptor to enter cells, and they become resistant to HIV infection when it is crippled. Several gene-therapy studies that use similar strategies are already being conducted.

Researchers express caution over the findings. As the man's doctor, Gero Heutter, acknowledged at a recent meeting held by the American Foundation of AIDS Research (AmFAR), low levels of HIV can escape detection by all but the most sensitive tests. Every time 'cured' people's blood has been examined with these techniques in the past, researchers have found the virus.

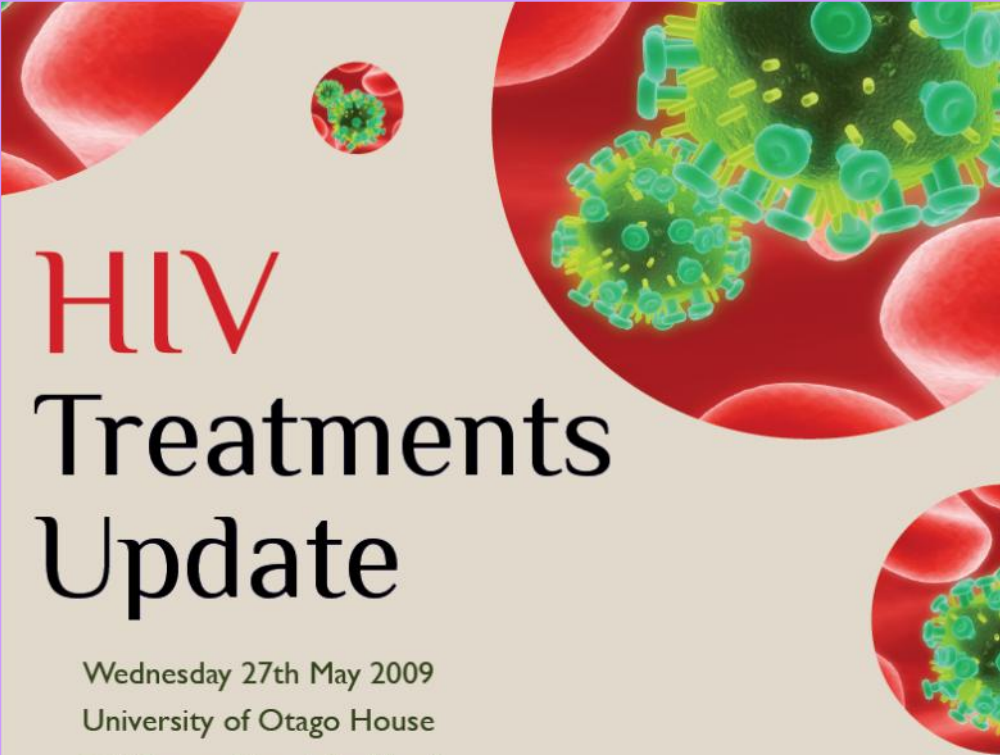
Participants at the AmFAR meeting agreed to call the man only 'functionally' cured because it is possible that the virus is still present in tiny

quantities in cells that were not ablated before his transplant.

Ablating a person's bone marrow and then transfusing them with another's cells is also a **high-risk procedure**, leading to death in up to one-third of patients. "The therapy has such a high mortality rate that it can't be justified ethically other than in this special situation where the patient has to have a transplant due to another illness," said Heutter. "I say this in order to reduce false hopes." The procedure also costs somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$250,000, which puts it out of reach for most people living with HIV.



But there might be a glimmer of hope. If the transplant does prove to have been a success and can be replicated, researchers say gene therapists might one day be able to re-engineer a patient's cells to change their bone marrow the same way a transplant does, except without the dangers. Such a breakthrough, if it proves possible, would be "decades rather than years away," according to Ade Fakoya, a London-based clinician and senior adviser to the non-profit Aids Alliance.



HIV Treatments Update

Wednesday 27th May 2009
University of Otago House
385 Queen Street, Auckland
.....

A one day seminar in HIV medicine and
treatments information.

Invitations extended to;

- Health professionals
- Community support groups
- People living with HIV.



For Further information Contact
Positive Women Inc.
1/3 Poynton Terrace
Newton, Auckland 1010
Email: positivewomen@xtra.co.nz
0800 POZTIV
09) 309 1858

SUPPORTED BY:



HIV Candle Light Memorial

International Candle Light Memorial Services are to be held on Sunday 17th of May 2009. The theme for this years service is "Together, we are the Solution". Services are being held at:

Auckland

St Mathews Church
Hobson Street, CBD
Starting at 6.30pm

Hamilton

Age Concern
30 Victoria Street
Starting at 6.30pm

Wellington

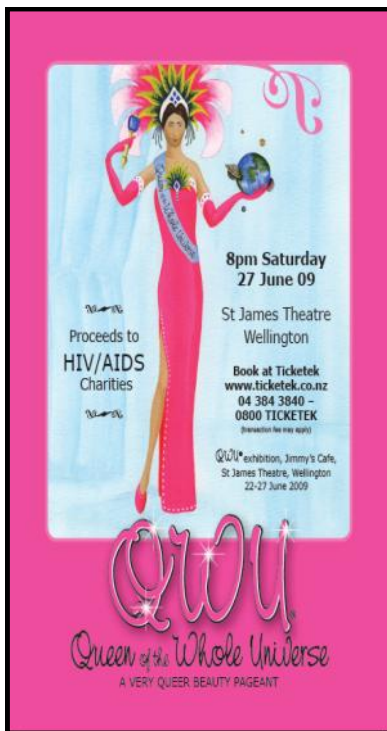
TBA

Christchurch

Great Hall
2 Worcester Street
Starting at 7pm

Invercargill

Bluff Hill
Starting at 6pm



Queen of the Whole Universe Wellington.....

If you live in Wellington, don't forget to book your tickets for the Queen of the Whole Universe Pageant.

Positive Women Inc. are one of the recipients of funds raised from this event so by supporting the QWU, you will also be supporting Positive Women Inc.

Looking for Friendship.....

Two HIV positive men are looking to find friendships with HIV positive women. One lives in Wellington and another in Auckland.

Contact Positive Women Inc. for email contact details

Positive Support Meetings



Positive Women Inc. is to run a weekly peer support group for women and their partners in May 2009. The support group will be held once a week from 7pm till 9pm and will run for a period of four weeks.

We require a minimum of 6 people to run the group. If successful and if there is a demand, we hope to run another group in July.



Straight Arrows Dinners

Last Thursday evening of the month

This social gathering is held on the last Thursday of each month from 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm in the central city. The Straight Arrows dinner is a chance for heterosexual HIV + people to come together for social support over a meal.

Positive Women Inc. AGM

Friday 29 May 2009 (10.30-12.30)

Contact Positive Women Inc. for more information

Contact

Positive Women Inc.

1/3 Poynton Terrace, Newton, Auckland 1010

Email: positivewomen@xtra.co.nz, Web: www.positivewomen.org.nz

Phone: (09) 309 1858,

Free phone: 0800 769 848

For more information on any of the above

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J R McKenzie Trust

