# 12 September 2015: Lost for words

September 12, 2015 By David Pieper

---

I have laryngitis. Which is a disaster for someone like me with an opinon on every issue. I am pretty sure this is not a side effect of the treatment I am on, but who knows. We are all guinea pigs in a way, until there is a solid few years of history on the long term effects of these drugs.

The drugs I am on have been through phase three trials, they have been found safe to use by Governments in Australia and other countries and the side effect profile is well documented. The same thing exactly can be said of the HIV drug I was on for several years, which reduced the bone density in my hip to that of an 80 year old woman. Nonetheless, like the HIV patients in the 80s, it's a calculated risk I am prepared to take. These drugs are my friends, and like all friends, they can be hard work sometimes.

More importantly, I have been invited to participate in a panel discussion on hepatitis C at an international HIV conference, to provide the community perspective. I need to be able speak by next week so can I express my views about hep C treatment as prevention for gay men with HIV/Hep C coinfection. It is a fantastic opportunity to to discuss sexual transmisson of hepatitis C with an audience of key decision makers in the HIV sector.

As it is a medical conference, I hope the clinicians in the audience, benefit from hearing first hand about my hep C treatment experience, and the comparisons I can make with HIV treatment, which they are more familiar with. But I also hope they will understand some of the human aspects of HIV/hep C coinfection.

Experts agree that there is no risk of sexually transmitted hepatis C for anyone in a monogamous relationship. There is also no risk for hetrosexuals or lesbians. But I wonder how many gay men are aware of the risk they face, and how many of those know how to protect themselves from transmitting or being infected with hepatitis C through sex?

The opinions expressed here are mine only and do not necessarily refect those of my employer.

---

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.