28 September 2015: Quality of Life

September 28, 2015 By David Pieper

It was with some sadness that I learned this week about the death of my Uncle. After a long and happy life he was stuck down with sudden onset of dementia. He and my aunt had barely spent a night apart in more than 50 years, but in recent months he had been by himself in a nursing home, as he needed 24 hour professional care. My aunt visited him every day but when I asked him how he was, all he could say was “I’m lonely”. I think death was a merciful release.

When I was young, I thought I’d probably be dead by the time I was 40, and being over 40 seemed pretty much the same as being dead anyway. But as that milestone, and others, passed I began to value my life more and more. Unfortunately by then I was already positive for HIV and hep C and I had already come to the conclusion, that I probably wouldn’t make 50.

Well here I am at the midway point in my hep C treatment, now undetectable for both HIV and hepatitis C, with the likely prospect that I will have a similar life expectancy to anyone of my age. But unlike some of my peers, I’ve already faced the prospect of death. I’ve already decided I don’t want to be lonely or poor or incapacitated in my old age. And when it’s time for me to check out, I will flick the switch myself if necessary. But in the meantime, I will be keeping myself fit and healthy because it is all about quality of life. And that’s why it is so important for all of us with hep C to get cured, so we can continue to enjoy quality of life.

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