



**Ever since AIDS first hit the headlines in 1981 the weight of evidence presented by the media is that HIV equals AIDS equals death. But Jody Wells, who is 51 and has had AIDS for six years, believes that long-term survival is a possibility. He has devised a holistic approach based on a positive attitude and good nutrition. LINDSEY RUSSELL asked him, 'How are you feeling?'...**

**'I am very well,**



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Over the years I've learned that by using my own devices I've always – in time – managed to get over whatever was wrong. I think the body's very self-healing, you see. It limits damage because it's one of nature's ways of ensuring your survival – I've always had a great faith in that.

I firmly believe that AIDS is *not* – as the media would have us believe – a terminal condition. I think it's quite possible to recover from AIDS. I've done things that other people with HIV and AIDS are afraid to do a lot of the time. I haven't had any blood tests done for the last three years and this famous T-cell count which is supposedly so important

– I've no idea what mine is. The last time I had it done it was 350 which is very average to low, but I felt that actually knowing what it was was far more damaging to my psychological health than not knowing.

**How has AIDS affected your health over the last six years?**

It hasn't. Apart from the lymphoma (*cancer of the lymph*) which I currently know is in check and is not causing me any problems at all. Yesterday afternoon, for instance, I dug a garden of 20 feet by 20 feet, and I feel fine today. I monitor my health by the way I feel.

Now if I felt there was something seriously wrong, I would not hesitate to go and seek some assistance. I haven't even had a cold this winter – I've been around people with raging flu, but it didn't touch me.

**Are you receiving any treatment for the tumour on your neck?**

Certainly not. Once you start operating on things like that it is recognised that cancerous cells get into other parts of the system and cause secondaries. I would rather that my body contain the cancer where it is than allowed it into other parts of the system.

**Visualisation and relaxation techniques have sometimes achieved remarkable results with so-called terminal diseases. Do you practise anything like that?**

Yes, I always have. I've been practising meditation since my teens. I did a course in 1985 in autogenic training with a doctor called Kai Kermanni at the Autogenic Training Centre in Essex, and that was very beneficial and I still practise that, too.

**What's special about your nutrition?**

Well it's extremely varied and all the vegetables I eat are steamed or raw – they're never boiled or whatever. I eat lots of salads. I continue to eat meat because there is evidence that people whose immune systems are damaged need a higher intake of protein than somebody who isn't compromised. I try to eat organic meat and organic vegetables. I also make sure that I get at least three meals a day because I find things start to go wrong with me if I skip meals. I need to give my system a constant supply of nutrition because it's not only keeping *me* alive, it's fighting something else as well. So it's like eating for two, in a way.

**How about exercise?**

I'm a very active person but I'm not a

sportsperson. I walk, I love gardening, and then of course I work for various voluntary organisations. (*Jody currently runs a fortnightly support group at Body Positive for people with HIV and AIDS.*) I'm setting up a new one myself at the moment called Continuum – I've just applied to the National AIDS Trust for funding – and it's going to address the needs of long-term survivors like myself who haven't had major medical intervention during the course of their HIV diagnosis or AIDS.

I'm always on the go. I sleep five hours a night, roughly. I really believe that we have a genetic clock within us that determines how much sleep we need, how much food we need, and how much exercise we need. I think it's important for people to learn to listen to that. If it says, 'You're tired. Rest' – rest. If it says, 'Now it's time to go to bed' – go to bed! If in the middle of the afternoon I suddenly think, 'Oh my god, I could do with a nap', I'll just stop whatever I'm doing and have a nap. So I really *do* listen to the signals that come from within. The brain/body link is something that we've been trained not to recognise in our lives over the years by the medical profession.

**I notice that you smoke!**

But I don't feel unwell through it. I haven't gone down with PCP (*pneumocystis carinii pneumonia*) even though I smoke 40 cigarettes a day. I enjoy smoking.

**Are there any particular vitamins and minerals which are helpful to your immune system?**

Yes. It is well known that vitamin A, Beta carotene, for instance, is protective of the skin and the lungs and the immune system, as are C and E. Also the B vitamins are very important, and mineral supplements like zinc and selenium. And it's interesting that people who die of AIDS – the medical profession and the dieticians *know* this – have massive losses of vitamins and minerals.

**So are you taking mega-doses?**

No, I'm just taking an average dose. I mean I would take 25,000 ius of Beta carotene a day (*the RDA is 1,000ius*) and 500ius of natural vitamin E – d-alpha tocopherol. I take about 1000mg of C a day and 700mg of bioflavonoids. And I take a standard one-a-day multi-mineral supplement (*250mg calcium, 50mg potassium, 150mg magnesium, 10mg zinc, 8mg manganese, 8mg iron, 1mg copper, 10mcg selenium, 10mcg chromium, 100mcg iodine*). Because I've been taking vitamins and minerals longer than most people, I feel that it's an insurance dose rather than a healing dose. I'm not in need of mega-doses though there are probably people who haven't had good

**thank you'**





nutrition and are quite seriously ill who would definitely need mega-doses.

**How many people do you know who are long-term survivors of AIDS?**

Personally, 30 at the moment, but I'm always hearing of other people, and on a nationwide basis it would run into quite a few hundreds I would think.

**Why do you think it is that we get to hear so little about people who do survive?**

Controversy! It's not in the interests of 'the establishment'. There's a lot of money to be made out of HIV and AIDS – all the way down the line. You've got

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Test Kits, you've got carers, you've got the medical profession, you've got the drug companies, you've got all the laboratories investigating it...Burroughs Wellcome made £170 million in the UK last year out of a compound called AZT which was tested on animals about 15 years ago as a chemotherapy for leukaemia and was found to be so toxic that it wasn't tested on humans and it was shelved. And yet, having discovered that it kills HIV *in vitro*, in the test tube, it was OK'd.

They have been using AZT now for a number of years, and there's still controversy over this, because people like myself see other people on AZT basically wasting away because of the side effects. AZT terminates DNA synthesis in the body. Large numbers of people are voluntarily coming off it.

**Have the long-term survivors of AIDS that you know been using holistic methods?**

Yes.

**Have any of them been taking the**

**anti-viral drugs?**

They've taken them for very short periods of time – and have stopped taking them. I know somebody last year who was on AZT and had been fine until then and had taken it for three months, decided that all the side effects he was having were too awful and stopped taking it – and was dead within three months. Now, it's very easy for the medical profession to turn around and say, 'Well, he was going to die anyway – it was AIDS'. But I know – I'm convinced – that if he hadn't touched it to begin with he would still be here to this day. As

I saw it, the symptoms of the side effects were classic – muscle atrophy, weight loss, and a continuing progression downhill that was impossible to recover from...

**Are there cases where people have found AZT to be helpful?**

Very few that I know. There are one or two people who have been on it a couple of years now and have had massive problems, needing blood transfusions to keep them going. It seems incredible to me. You know, you already have a damaged immune system, you're taking a drug that's highly toxic and immune-damaging and because of that you then need blood transfusions which are further immune-suppressive to keep you alive. It just gets worse and worse.

**I take it that you've never tried AZT, or any of the other anti-viral drugs?**

God forbid! No. There's a very interesting book called *Poison By Prescription: The AZT Story* by John Lauritsen who's an investigative journalist and a trained

epidemiologist. It's a really terrifying book and I think it ought to be compulsory reading for everyone who's found to be HIV positive in order to allow them to assess for themselves how they should conduct their own health system. You see, lots of people like myself do holistic things like acupuncture and homoeopathy.

**Do you use homoeopathy as a preventive measure as well as if you've 'got' something?**

Yes. It does no harm to keep things in balance. But I don't use it all the time; I only use it when I'm going through a patch when I feel a little tired, or I'm not listening to the voice inside. I also use acupuncture if I feel a bit low, as an energising, balancing thing.

**Is there a link between people who are affected by AIDS?**

I think the link is poor nutrition. There are three main groups affected: gay men, intravenous drug users and people in Third World countries. Having spoken to people working in the field out in East Africa, all of them have maintained that nutrition is a problem out there – that people don't get enough vitamins and minerals in their diets.

I think it's interesting also that

- The Department of Health's latest AIDS figures for the UK show that there are 5,191 cases in total, of whom 3,247 are known to have died (3,085 men, 162 women).

- The latest (orthodox) estimate is that 50% of people with HIV will go on to develop an HIV-related illness within 10-12 years.

- The World Health Organisation estimates that there are 1.3 million cases of AIDS worldwide, together with 8-10 million of HIV infection. Three million women are estimated to be infected with HIV.

- Postively Healthy is currently the UK's only major HIV/AIDS organisation which does not follow the orthodox medical line. Registered as a charity, it conducts independent lay medical research into the holistic treatment of HIV. It knows of at least 300 people with HIV infection in the UK who have outlived the expectations of the medical profession.

Contact Cass Mann at BCM-Quackquackquack, London WC1N 3XX, tel: 081 948 1640.

- Continuum is a new support group in the UK for long-term survivors and those interested in using holistic methods for dealing with HIV and AIDS. Contact Jody Wells, tel: 081 453 0706.



intravenous drug users' appetites are suppressed by the habit – it's well known that that happens.

And in gay society, we do tend to ignore our nutrition over a long period of time. Being a gay man myself, I don't want the gay community to think I'm being disloyal, but what happens is – we usually discover about our sexuality in our teens and we realise that we're different. We either leave home because

## **I'm not saying, 'Eat some cabbage and forget the condoms'**

we don't want to share that with our families and hurt our families (although they ought not to be hurt by it), or if they do find out, we're turfed out of the house. So we gravitate to our own gay culture where we're not bound by the strictures of society as a whole. We're often out in the evening in a pub or a club or a disco. We do this, I think, with more freedom than our heterosexual counterparts. Equally, this myth that all gay people are wonderful cooks is simply not true. I know so many gay people who couldn't cook an egg!

### **But people outside those groups can be under-nourished too...**

The whole population of this country is under-nourished! And because people are not educated to spend their money wisely on nutrition, they pop into the nearest store and buy one of those 'just-add-water' snacks. Well what do these snacks contain? A little bit of flavouring and plenty of refined carbohydrates. But nutritionally, they suck. There's nothing in them. And people live on food like this for years.... Women are bombarded all the time in the press to diet, diet, diet. I mean, you're always meeting women who are not eating...

### **So are you saying that under-nourishment is one of the most important factors in people getting AIDS?**

Both Robert Gallo and Luc Montagnier, who discovered HIV, have said publicly that HIV alone is not capable of causing AIDS, that it has to have a co-factor of some kind. It's extraordinary that the opportunistic infections that people with AIDS are prone to, like PCP, or Candidiasis, or TB, are all diseases of malnutrition. PCP was originally discovered in children in Berlin during the Second World War who were malnourished, and it disappeared after the War when people began to be nourished properly again.

### **But how does HIV take hold? Is it because your immune system is not up to scratch in the first place?**

That's the question that nobody's clear about. I think it's important to know that

10% of people who die of AIDS are not HIV positive.

### **That's a new one to me.**

Well, read John Lauritsen's book! Professor Duesburg, who's worked with retroviruses for about 20 years, has maintained all along that in order for HIV to cause the damage that it does, it would have to invade as many body cells as you were able to produce on a daily basis, and yet it's only been

found to invade one in 500 body cells. Following me?

### **Mmm...**

Now, there may be some way in which HIV becomes more dangerous in a situation where the body's defence system is weakened by a lack of nutrients. I'm no scientist, but I've invented a term 'ANDS', which is Acquired Nutritional Deficiency Syndrome. I'm writing a paper and I'm going to send it to the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* and the title of it's going to be *Red Herrings – ANDS or AIDS? And the red herring as far as I'm concerned, is HIV, because too much focus has been put on HIV as the only causative factor. Nutritional Deficiency Syndrome is a very important precursor to AIDS. And I quite firmly believe that if you correct the ANDS situation, AIDS will not develop. However, I would like to make it clear that I'm not saying, 'Eat some cabbage and forget the condoms...'*

### **Your success in dealing with AIDS is encouraging for others. Do you think that anybody who adopts a holistic approach with an emphasis on high-level nutrition has an equal chance?**

Yes, I think so. It's interesting that The People With AIDS Coalition in America said publicly that their evidence is that all long-term survivors who are members of the Coalition are people who had no medical intervention.

The reason that I'm putting Continuum together, which is going to be similar to the American organisation, is to find out on a nationwide basis how true that holds over here.

### **In what way have your experiences of the last 10 years altered your philosophy of life?**

One of the great fears that we all have is sitting across the desk from a doctor and being told that we have a terminal illness. Once it's happened, it really can be very liberating, depending on how you look at it. I remember after I got the diagnosis I walked out into the spring sunshine and the blossoms were on the trees and the sun was warm and the

birds were twittering away and I thought, 'I love being alive!'

My philosophy is that death is a normal part of the living process. But it's something in our society that we've been taught to fear and avoid at all costs.

### **For anybody out there with HIV infection or AIDS, what are your final words of advice?**

To get in touch with Continuum. (Details at end of feature.) To find out as much as they can about their immune system. To find out about vitamins and minerals and what effect they have on the immune system.

To look again at nutritional intake and not to be afraid of saying 'No' to the doctor and finding another way of dealing with the minor complications that one is likely to run into.

There are major things like PCP which need quite severe medical intervention, which holistics will not take care of – although I do know somebody who had PCP and went into hospital, had the initial dose of antibiotics, and then refused everything, and made a much quicker recovery than I've ever seen anyone with PCP make. And that person is well to this day.

## **Books**

*Poison By Prescription: The AZT Story* by John Lauritsen. Published by Asklepios, ISBN 0-943742-06-4, £9.50. But only £7.50, including p&p and recorded delivery, from non-profit-making organisation Positively Healthy. Cheques payable to Cass Mann at BCM-Quackquackquack, London WC1N 3XX, tel: 081 948 1640.

*Nutritional Medicine* by Dr Stephen Davies and Dr Alan Stewart. Published by Pan, ISBN 0-330-28833-4, £7.99.

*A World Without AIDS* by Leon Chaitow and Simon Martin. Currently out of print but available for £7.64, including p&p, from Green Library, Mariner House, 53a High Street, Bagshott, Surrey GU19 5AH, tel: 0276 51522. Cheques payable to Green Library.

*Why I Survive AIDS* by Niro Markoff Asistent with Paul Duffy. Published by Simon & Schuster, New York, ISBN 0-671-68352-7, £7.99. Warehouse tel: 0442 882255.

For a wide range of books on HIV and AIDS, contact Gay's The Word, 66 Marchmont Street, London WC1N 1AB, tel: 071 278 7654 or West and Wilde, 25a Dundas Street, Edinburgh EH3 6QQ, tel: 031 556 0079.



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