

**ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES FOR CANCER**

**AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2009**

# Townsend Letter

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# Letters to the Editor

## **Denial of HIV Can Be a Death Sentence**

I am writing this because I am in complete disagreement with HIV denialists and feel that someone should counterpoint the support for this notion that I see in *Townsend Letter*.

Just to give a little background for those who don't know me: My family has deep roots in natural health care, going back a long time. I've been using natural health care for 44 years and been involved in researching it for over 30 years. I have been a political activist for natural health care and was given the "Activist of the Year" award by Citizens for Health for my efforts in passing the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act of 1994 (DSHEA). I work as director of education in a family business making orthomolecular vitamin formulas that are sold in mainstream natural food stores.

I am HIV-negative, but I have donated my time in the world of

HIV/AIDS, realizing in 1995 that I would be saving lives when I began the battle to turn the world of HIV medical doctors upside down by promoting the science that showed that testosterone and anabolic steroids aren't "bad" and that their appropriate use improved markers associated with better immune function and survival in HIV. I also advocated for orthomolecular nutrition, especially the use of higher-potency dietary supplements to support immune function and reduce the toxicity caused by HIV-antiviral medications. Real people living with HIV survived better and were physically hardier when testosterone was given. The same is true of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, so positive anecdotes drove a lot of what changed the minds of mainstream HIV doctors.

I worked with HIV-positive treatment activist Nelson Vergel to coauthor *Built To Survive* (available on Amazon), a book that changed the face of HIV medicine by providing patients and their doctors with science-based reasons to take vitamins, eat



a logical healthy diet, exercise, and consider hormonal intervention such as the use of testosterone, nandrolone, oxandrolone, and other anabolic steroids.

The medical establishment didn't like our message at first but found such success that they eventually embraced us and our message, because their patients were alive, energetic, happier, and healthier. Dr. Michael Gottlieb, who reported the first cases of HIV+ men in 1981 and practices HIV medicine in Los Angeles, will tell you good things about Nelson and me.

I also had been an HIV denialist in the early '90s and worked with one of the denialist organizations until it stopped making sense. Afterward, I didn't speak with anyone from that group until a couple of years ago; I was told that one of the two leaders had died at a young age, refusing to treat his HIV with medications. So goes it.

That all being said, I would condemn the support, promotion, and engagement of the HIV denialists in the natural-health medical community as a distraction from the real goal of helping people with HIV to survive and be healthy. In some cases I know, it is also simply part of a habit pattern within an effort to oppose mainstream medicine, rather than having solid scientific footage that might save lives and real-world experience that confirms their hypothesis by seeing what's happening with real people who live with HIV. My feeling it that it's bad for natural health care to be seen as embracing this rubbish. Some of my friends who have HIV and know it well look at this as just another example of how "nutty" natural health-care people can be. And, typically, those natural health-care proponents who embrace this notion do not work in the HIV world. Having little or no direct experience with it, how can they really know what's going on?

Over the years I have seen maybe a dozen people die, people who listened to the denialists and didn't address their HIV, when they had had the same chance of survival as others who did use mainstream antiviral medications along with CAM and are still alive and well today in 2009.

Please consider this when reading pro-HIV-denialist information. There are those of us long-term active natural-health proponents who disagree entirely with this notion and feel that it actually has done great harm to people with HIV who believe it and forgo appropriate treatment. Believing in it can be a death sentence.

Sincerely,  
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## Enhancing Chemotherapy Effectiveness with Simple Vitamin C? My Clinical Experiences

Generally it is not advised by the oncology community for patients with cancer to take any other form of treatment when they are receiving chemotherapy, for fear of a negative interaction. The rationale for this recommendation, particularly with vitamins, largely stems from fears of the antioxidant debate or from the very limited information published. A recent article published October 1, 2008, in the journal *Cancer Research* cast further doubt on this subject area to a point that even a senior scientist here at the B.C. Cancer Agency [regional public health authority] publicly discouraged patients to use vitamin C together with chemotherapy.

If I were an oncologist and trained only in conventional medicine, I could