



# The Phoenix

Volume I, Issue 2

February 1, 2011

After much consideration the board has decided to change the name of the newsletter to **The Phoenix!** Like the mythical bird, we regularly seem to rise from the ashes.

### Inside this issue:

Message from the Chair VIPWAS goes Social	1
Major Breakthrough in	2
The Sunni Side - Programs	3
Peripheral Neuropathy ... it's still a problem	4
Bits and Bites	5
Sponsors and Supporters	6
Event and Program Calendar	7



Vancouver Island  
PWA Society

## February 14th is *National Condom Day*



### National Condom Day

Valentine's Day is just around the corner.

Valentine's Day is the day for lovers and whereas there will be cards and flowers exchanged and more than a few candle lit dinners there will be a bit of 'nooky' too.

- Condom use can be part of foreplay.
- Condoms can be sexy.
- Condoms come in flavours.
- Five Billion Condoms are used each year...but it is not enough.
- There are more than 100 different brands of Condom on the market...try them all,
- The Danish word for Condom is 'svangerskabsforebyggemiddel'.
- The first published use of the word 'Condom' was in a 1706 poem.
- The first Condoms were made of animal intestines and in use in 1000 BC
- The average shelf life of a Condom is two years...how long has it been in your wallet or handbag?
- Condoms appeared in Cave Paintings in France in circa 200 AD

## VIPWAS Goes Social

Join VIPWAS on the world wide web, we have now created both facebook and twitter pages to help spread the word of HIV/AIDS and HEP C awareness and support, and to help keep you in touch with what's happening at VIPWAS.



Search Vancouver Island PWA Society



<http://www.Twitter.com/VIPWAS>

Note: Friends of Vancouver Island Persons Living with HIV/AIDS Society (VIPWAS) or persons featured in our newsletter, photos, videos or web posts should not be assumed to be HIV+ unless expressly stated by the person themselves.

# Living with HIV—Personal Stories

## Ugh! meds ...



This photo I took shows how being HIV+ and my meds used to make me feel, "highly processed" and separated from my body and alone. I know I am one of the lucky ones where the physical side effects haven't been that bad overall, save for a few mood swings (sorry to those that get in the way of one of them), but psychologically it's tiring.

The nightly routine of swallowing this pill for that and that one for this ... some nights my throat closes up at the thought of having to take more ... the constant reminder that I have this "disease" in my body that I have to live with.

Thankfully with the support of my husband and life partner of 11 years, good friends and the support of organizations such as VIPWAS giving me the opportunity to talk to and be with my peers, I know that I am not alone, and people understand what I am going through.

With this support I can now get up in the morning and go on with my day looking forward and planning for the future, knowing my meds, along with exercise and healthy diet, are good friends too.

~ c ~ (HIV+ 15 years)

Share your story [suport@vpwas.com](mailto:suport@vpwas.com)

## Major Breakthrough in HepC Treatment

Health Canada has granted Priority Review status for telaprevir, an experimental protease inhibitor for the treatment of the hepatitis C virus (HCV). Approval can normally take up to 18 months but priority status guarantees a decision within 6 – 9 months from the date of submission.

Three separate Phase 3 studies

conducted in the US, Canada and Europe in people chronically infected with HCV genotype 1, demonstrated that telaprevir, when combined with standard therapy (pegylated interferon + ribavirin), nearly doubled the viral cure rates and cut treatment time in half for the majority of patients new to treatment. Up to 75% of people new to treatment achieved a viral cure

with telaprevir-based therapy (compared to 44% using standard therapy alone) and the majority of these were able to complete their course of treatment in 6 months.

Another experimental protease inhibitor for chronic HCV, boceprevir, is also under priority review, and could result in a major paradigm shift for HCV therapy.



### Blog of note:

Victoria's Favorite Karaoke Host (and VIPWAS friend) to cycle the Pan American to raise HIV/AIDS Awareness. Check it out at <http://elizabethbarett.wordpress.com>



# The Sunni Side

## PEER SUPPORT

Over the last couple of weeks several of our members and board members took part in VIPWAS Peer Support Training program led by M. Yoder, sincere thank you to Mr. Yoder for his time and for sharing his knowledge with us. A big congratulations goes out to those that took part. This will help ensure that support is always available to you, our members.



## ART for HAARTs



I am happy to announce that the *Art for HAARTs*, art therapy program will be starting on February 2, 2011 from 6:00 to 8:30pm, and will run for ten weeks at the VIPWAS office. (There will be no more intakes due to the start date of the program). Thank you to all that have enrolled!

## THE PHEONIX

We have had great reviews and positive feedback on our newsletter's new look and name change. Thanks to Craig Dales for all the hard work you have done.

If you have ideas for articles or submissions, be it photos, poems artwork, stories or issues that you would like to have covered in **The Phoenix**, please contact us at support@vpwas.com, call us at 250.382.7927 or drop into the office.

Remember, **The Phoenix** is for you, VIPWAS members.

## We Missed you!!!!

I would like to thank Kim from the James Bay New Horizons Center for providing the location to hold our events. This past *Diner and a Movie* event (The Social Network), held on Saturday January 22, 2011 was a moderate success in attendance numbers, yet a great night for those who were there.

As VIPWAS

Programs Co-ordinator it would be nice to see more of our members come out and participate in the events and programs that we offer, this will ensure that these events and programs can continue into the future.



## PEER SUPPORT AFTER HOURS

We know that not all of our members can make it to the office during the daytime office hours, perhaps a Thursday evening peer support group or even a casual coffee house meet-up is more up your alley? Contact the office and let us know if this interests you! We are open to hearing all new ideas.

**We are also looking for more volunteers for reception please feel free to contact me anytime.**

**Norman (Sunni) Tesluk,**

Program Co-ordinator, Event Planner

101-1139 Yates Street

Victoria, BC

Ph: 250-382-7927

Cell: 250-888-2637

support@vpwas.com

## Schedule of Events

- **Wings cheque pick-up**  
Monday, February 28, 2011
- **Art for HAARTs**  
**Art Therapy Program**  
Wednesdays 6 to 8:30pm  
VIPWAS Office  
(session full)
- **Healing Circle Group**  
Thursdays 1:30 p.m.
- **IMAX Legends of Flight:**  
**The New Generation**  
2:00pm Saturday February 26, 2011  
Call the office to reserve your seat  
**Please arrive at the front entrance by no later than 1:45**

## Programs and Services on going

## Treatment Library

Daily from the time we are open till closing. Our office has one of the most extensive and respected treatment information libraries in western Canada. Contact the office directly if you have any questions regarding your current treatment or any other possibilities. Don't forget, we also have information and contacts relating to co-infected HIV/HCV individuals and treatment options currently available.

## Peer Support

One-on-one or group sessions daily from the time we are open till closing. Our 24 hour peer support and information line is also available by calling our main reception at 250-382-5311 or toll free at 1-877-382-7927 from anywhere out of the area.

## Computer Access

Open for access during office hours. Monday to Friday, 10—4 pm.

## The Healing Circle

A healing circle facilitated by Nicole Jackson from the Victoria Native Friendship Centre.

Every Thursday afternoon 1:30 p.m.



# Peripheral neuropathy... it's still a problem

Peripheral neuropathy, usually affecting the feet, is common among people with HIV. This is still the case even though the drugs most strongly associated with nerve damage - d4T and ddI - are rarely, if ever, prescribed in Canada today.

Noting that elevated levels of triglycerides (TG) in the blood and other metabolic abnormalities are associated with an increased risk for neuropathy among diabetics, researchers at the University of California (San Diego) designed a study to evaluate whether a similar link is evident in people with HIV.

The investigators looked for predictors of risk observing 436 HIV+ people (mostly men, median age = 52 years and 75% on combination therapy) compared to 55 HIV- negative controls.

HIV neuropathy was defined as having one or more clinical signs of reduced sensation or ankle reflexes. Symptoms include foot pain, and sensations of tingling, burning, or numbness.

The researchers assessed metabolic factors including TG levels, cholesterol and blood sugar as well as other risk factors such as age, height, current and nadir (lowest ever) CD4 counts and current or past use of protease inhibitors.

Results:

- 27% of the HIV+ group had neuropathy compared to 10% of the negative group
- 48% of the HIV+ group with neuropathy were symptomatic and the rest had measurable clinical signs

*"27% of the HIV+ group had neuropathy compared to 10% of the negative group"*

- Overall average TG levels were significantly higher among the positives compared to the controls (mean= 2.45 vs. 1.6. (ideally, TG levels should not exceed 1.7 mmol/L).
- After adjusting for other factors, HIV+ participants with TG levels in the highest third (2.44 and less) were significantly more likely to experience neuropathy than those with levels in the lower third (1.42 or less). Elevated TG levels almost tripled the risk for neuropathy
- Other factors associated with neuropathy were older age, greater height, type 2 diabetes, lower nadir CD4 cell count and use of statins (cholesterol-lowering drugs)
- Protease inhibitor use was associated with greater likelihood of neuropathy, but unexpectedly, prior use of d4T or ddI was not.

Since this study showed elevated TG as an independent risk factor for neuropathy in people with HIV, the researchers suggested "interventions" leading to a reduction in TG levels. Elevated TG levels may be managed with life style modifications (diet, exercise, minimizing alcohol use and supplementing with omega 3's) or by using a class of drugs called fenofibrates.



## **National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (US)**

February 7th is recognized annually as the National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day [U.S.] (NBHAAD) - a nationwide community mobilization initiative that leads to capacity building to increase awareness, participation, and support for HIV prevention among African Americans.

The goal of NBHAAD is to motivate Black Americans at risk for HIV to get educated and tested, and to get HIV/AIDS stakeholders involved in prevention education programs, HIV testing, press conferences, community forums and other activities to raise awareness, participation and support for HIV prevention among Black Americans. Since 2001, federal, state, and local governmental agencies; community-based organizations; AIDS service organizations; public and private partners in prevention, treatment and care; as well as partners in the business, entertainment, and faith communities have all joined together in support of National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. Please help us to prevent HIV in Black communities, one voice, one experience, one conversation at a time! [www.blackaidsday.org](http://www.blackaidsday.org)

# Bits and Bites

**April is tax month in Canada...  
Do you need your taxes done?**



TAPS offers Income Tax Preparation every Thursday morning from 9-11am. This is a free, face-to-face program offered by trained volunteers provided on a first come first serve basis, so it's best to get to the TAPS office early. Call for an appointment.

Together Against Poverty Society  
#302 - 895 Fort Street  
Victoria BC V8W 1H7  
Phone: (250) 361-3521  
Fax: (250) 361-3541

**Education and Treatment  
Drop In Support Group**

An informal group for those living with HIV/AIDS to attend for general support and information about HIV care and treatment.

**Where:**  
Cool Aid Community Health Centre  
713 Johnson Street

**When:**  
Fridays, 10-11am

**Facilitators:**  
Dr. Chris Fraser and health centre staff

Light snacks and refreshments will be provided

**Did You Know ...**

There are three locations in Victoria that you can get your HIV meds. They are Royal Jubilee Hospital, Access Community Health (Cool Aid), or you can have you scripts transferred to LalliCare Pharmacy (in the same building as VIPWAS) or your pharmacy of choice.



1139 Yates Street  
Victoria B.C.

Phone: 250.386.5100  
<http://lallicareclinic.ca/>

# VIPWAS Circle Group

The VIPWAS Circle group is facilitated by Nicole Jackson Aboriginal Health Outreach Worker at the Victoria Native Friendship Centre.

The Circle is a space for clients to come and meet others; it is a space where clients have the opportunity

to share their challenges and triumphs; or just sit and listen. Participants are requested to maintain confidentiality of the circle, "what's said in the Circle, stays in the Circle".

The Circle has recently passed its 2<sup>nd</sup> year and is going strong. Those who wish to

come to this circle group, please feel free to contact the VIPWAS office, or drop-in on Thursday afternoons at 1:30pm.



*"what's said in the  
Circle,  
stays in the Circle"*

# VIPWAS POETRY CONTEST!

Calling on all members of VIPWAS to enter VIPWAS Poetry Contest. Get those creative juices flowing and put pen to paper and express yourself in the form of poetry.

This competition is open to poems in any style and on any subject

Call for submissions  
*"I think that I shall  
never see,  
a poem lovely as a  
tree ..."*

under 30 lines long. The closing date for submissions is April 15th, 2011. The prize for first place is \$100, second place \$50, and \$25 for third. Winners will be announced in the May 2011 issue of The Phoenix! and pub-

lished in both the newsletter and on the VIPWAS website.

Send your submissions to: [support@vpwas.com](mailto:support@vpwas.com) or drop of at the VPWAS office at 101-1139 Yates Street.

Stay tuned for more contests  
VIPWAS: Photography, Short Story

**VIPWAS—VANCOUVER ISLAND PERSONS WITH HIV/AIDS SOCIETY**

101-1139 Yates Street  
Victoria B.C.  
V8V3N2

Phone: 250.382.7927  
Toll Free: 1.877.382.7927  
Fax: 250.382.3232  
E-mail: [support@vpwas.com](mailto:support@vpwas.com)

Office hours: Monday to Friday 11am—4pm



*Vancouver Island PWA Society*



**Invitation to All *POSITIVE* WOMEN IN B.C.**

**ViVA**

**ViVA** is an on-line advocacy and peer-support network created by and for HIV positive women. We welcome and encourage ALL women living with HIV in B.C. to participate.

**ViVA** runs a listserv (confidential group e-mail list) that we utilize to communicate between positive women across the province.

If you are interested in being on the ViVA listserv simply e-mail [vivawomen@gmail.com](mailto:vivawomen@gmail.com) and/or call Margarite toll free at 1.866.482.3445.



**Sponsors and Supporters**



Vancouver Island PWA Society is grateful to our many generous private donors, corporate and community sponsors



We would also like to thank the many private individual anonymous donors who have contributed funds and gifts.



**The PHOENIX** is a publication of the Vancouver Island Persons with HIV/AIDS Society. **VIPWAS** is a peer-driven non-profit organization run by and for people living with HIV and people co-infected with HCV.



We welcome your input, ideas and involvement.

Contact the office for more information about programs and services.

250-382-7927, or drop in at 1139 Yates Street (in the Lalli Care Clinic Building) or email: [support@vpwas.com](mailto:support@vpwas.com) or visit Web: <http://www.vpwas.com/>



# February 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Peer Support	2 ARTS for HAARTs 6 to 8:30pm	3 Peer Support Circle Group 1:30pm	4	5
6	7 VIPWAS Poetry Contest Start call for submissions	8 Peer Support	9 ARTS for HAARTs 6 to 8:30pm	10 Peer Support Circle Group 1:30pm	11	12
13	14 Valentine's Day 	15 Peer Support	16 ARTS for HAARTs 6 to 8:30pm	17 Peer Support Circle Group 1:30pm	18	19
20	21	22 Peer Support	23 ARTS for HAARTs 6 to 8:30pm	24 Peer Support Circle Group 1:30pm	25	26 IMAX 2:00 pm Legends of Flight: The New Generation 
27	28 Wings pick-up					