

Part One Introduction

Chapter 2 Chronic HIV and its effects

2-1. What is HIV?

HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. It is a virus that spreads through body fluids and destroys the immune system.

2-2. What happens if HIV is not controlled?

If HIV is not controlled, it badly damages the immune system. Your body will not be able to fight infections or cancers that it usually could manage if it were healthy. This state is called AIDS, which stands for Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. Without treatment, AIDS leads to death. When HIV first occurred in 1980s, we did not have good treatment. HIV was a death sentence. Now that we have good treatment, HIV is no longer a death sentence.

2-3. What happens now that we have good HIV treatment?

With good treatment, HIV is now a chronic disease that people simply live with, like high blood pressure. The result is that for the first time, we now have people with chronic HIV, someone who have lived with HIV for decades. This has never happened before in human history, and we are learning about what this means for the first time.

2-4. What happens with chronic HIV?

We need more studies, but it seems that chronic HIV has bad health outcomes. This stems from 2 reasons:

- a. *Virus damage*: HIV can directly damage many organs, causing diseases.
- b. *Side effects of HIV pills*: HIV pills continue to get better everyday, with fewer side effects. But, many HIV pills we used in the past were quite toxic. Many people aging with chronic HIV took these pills when they were younger. These pills cause long-term damages that are still present today.