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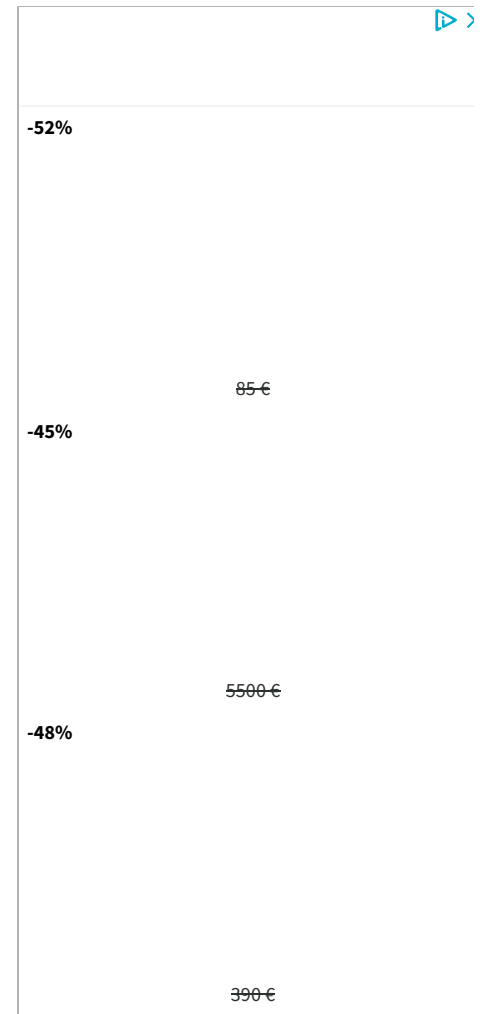
# HIV-INFECTED PEOPLE ARE STILL DISCRIMINATED AGAINST

March 6, 2023 by archyde

**Bernd Hontschik / 6.03.2023 An HIV-positive student was excluded from a German university even though he is not contagious.**

*Red. The author of this guest article is a surgeon and publicist in Frankfurt.*

First the good news, it dates back to February of this year: an HIV-positive patient was cured in Düsseldorf! The patient was



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diagnosed with acute myeloid

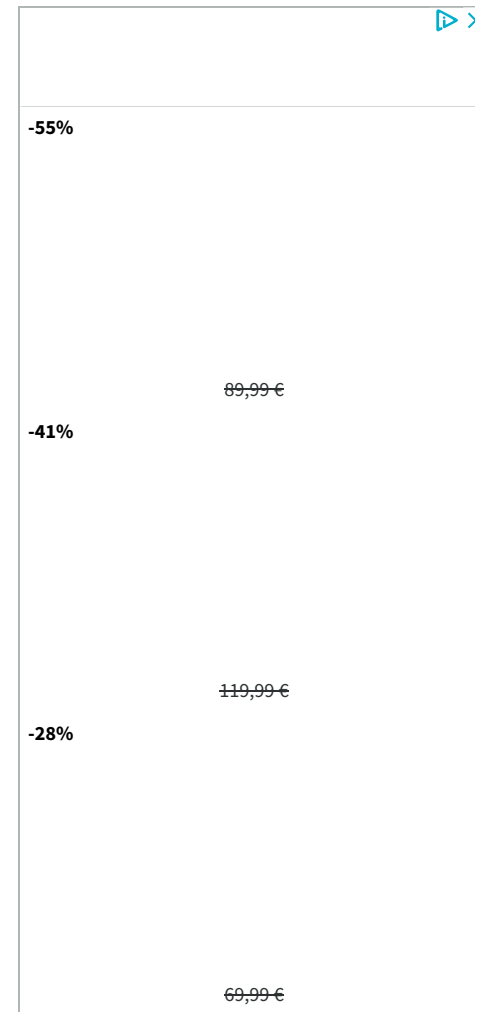
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leukemia in 2011, which is why he had to undergo a stem cell transplant two years later. Since then, the immune system of the patient, who has been suffering

from AIDS since 2008, has been able to fight off the HIV infection without any antiviral therapy.

Here's how it happened: Each cell has entry ports on the surface of its shell. These are proteins in the membrane called chemokine receptors. Their configuration is defined in the genetic material of each cell. The HIV virus also needs a chemokine receptor to enter and infect host cells. For the stem cell transplantation of the HIV patient, a donor was found who lacked the gene for this special chemokine receptor in the genetic material. The HIV virus was thus locked out, so to speak, and infection was no longer possible after the successful stem cell transplant. In the same way, a patient in Berlin and a patient in London have previously been healed. However, whether this method will be suitable for widespread use in HIV patients is still an open question, because a stem cell transplant is no walk in the park, and there are now some cases where the method has been used unsuccessfully.

Now for the second report from November last year, which I initially thought was just a bad joke: last year at the Philipps University in Marburg, a dental student was expelled from his studies because he was HIV positive. The young man had already completed the first two theoretical sections of the course and was now to begin the clinical-practical part of the course. During the routine occupational medical examination before this part of the study, he agreed to an HIV test. He had known about his infection since 2012 and had been able to lower his viral load permanently below the limit of 200 virus copies per milliliter of blood with medication. He was no longer considered infectious. So he was flabbergasted when the university informed him that he now had to be excluded from his studies. There is a risk of injury that could endanger patients and fellow students.



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With an expert opinion from a leading HIV scientist, he was able to win the case before the administrative court in Giessen, but the Hessian administrative court ruled in favor of the university in the second instance. Memories of the former Bavarian Secretary of State for the Interior Peter Gauweiler (“They’re just lepers”) and the young member of parliament Horst Seehofer are awakened, who forty years ago called for compulsory tests for homosexuals and wanted to isolate infected people in guarded “homes” or on an island, or else to the former Bavarian Minister of Education, Hans Zehetmair (also CSU), for whom homosexuality belonged in the “periphery of degeneration”, not only “contra naturam, but also contra deum”. Almost forty years later, the Middle Ages and homophobia have apparently not only taken hold of Marburg University, but also of the Hessian judiciary. It is this simultaneity of the deep Middle Ages and futuristic high-tech medicine that leaves you speechless.

I dedicate this column to the doctor and sexologist Professor Volkmar Sigusch, who died on February 7th in Frankfurt am Main at the age of 83. In 1985, Sigusch saw a “new chapter in the persecution of homosexuals” in the initial handling of AIDS described above. In the Deutsches Ärzteblatt he wrote in 1986: “Thinking about the cultural use of a disease, about the mechanisms of a perversion, can encourage medicine to only understand the disease and not an entire life as a pathology. Neither doctors nor sex researchers are there to keep the streets clean and to technically fudge the contradictions of modern life. » That still applies today, it always applies, and there is nothing to add.

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*This article appeared in the “Frankfurter Rundschau” on March 4th.*

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