24 August: Scientific Pornography

August 24, 2015 By David Pieper

Someone else on the same treatment as me, described the dreams he's been having as scientific pornography. I can't say mine were pornographic or scientific but they have definitely been weird. My sleep has been disrupted too and I have found myself wide awake staring at ceiling at 4am. Apparently insomnia is a common side effect of this treatment. Which at one level is reassuring, because it means something is happening. I don't think I am particularly anxious about the treatment or troubled by other issues any more than usual, but it would be nice to be able to switch off and get some sleep!

In between insomnia, my dreams have been have been graphic and even confronting. In one I was being pursued by a group of people intent on taking the treatment drugs away from me. I was just as intent on keeping them. What ensued was a chase through the streets of what looked like a video game until I woke up sweating and exhausted. I guess that might represent my battle to access treatment and my determination to see it through, no matter what.

In another dream I was challenged by a woman who disputed my diagnosis of sexually transmitted hepatitis C. So she set out to disprove it by deliberately having unprotected sex with men who had hepatitis C. In my dream she ended up with hepatitis B, and claimed that somehow proved her point. I woke up furious - the evidence is in and there is an epidemic of sexually transmitted hepatitis C among HIV+ gay men. But clearly in my subconscious I am still fighting off the deniers and those who seek to dismiss it. Thankfully, my clinician believes me and is working with others in my position in an attempt to contain this epidemic.

All things considered, I can deal with a few sleepless nights and some strange dreams to get to the cure I am so desperate for. But it strikes me that people living with hepatitis C deal with a lot of shit that people who live with other diseases don't have to deal with. I am hoping my treatment experience can shed light on some of those areas.

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