Countdown To Leaving For India

May 11, 2015 By Greg Jefferys

May 4th
Only ten days before I leave for India. Now I start to worry, wondering if I have done the right thing? Have I just wasted $3,000? What if I get to India and cannot get a doctor to prescribe the drug for me? What if I go to India and come back with fake tablets? It happens often enough.

I went to my GP today to get a final blood test and have a chat. He was very supportive and reaffirmed how important Indian pharmaceutical companies had been in reducing the cost of HIV drugs in the 1990's. My GP worked in an AIDS clinic in Africa during the early 1990's and he told me how, because of the high cost of the HIV drugs then, getting HIV was basically a death sentence for most of his patients. Then the Indian government had decided to ignore the patents on HIV drugs and started manufacturing and supplying cheap HIV drugs for India and also its African neighbors. My doctor said that all of a sudden his clinic was able to help people with HIV. This continued for a couple of years while the big multi-national drug companies put more and more pressure on India to stop supplying the cheap drugs. Then pressure was put on the particular African country my GP was working in. The government was told either it stopped using the Indian generic brands or all its funding from the World Health Organization would be stopped. So the generic brands were stopped. Suddenly the Clinic had no access to the cheap Indian drugs and people started dieing again.

According to my GP thousands and thousands of people died before pressure from powerful individuals and organisations reversed the process and the India generics were allowed back into Africa.

By strange coincidence, again, as I was walking to the doctor's surgery for my final blood tests I bumped into Z's wife again. That was too weird, to bump into her twice in three days when I have not seen her more than four times in the last seven years. I had been thinking about Z as I drove in, thinking about his situation and I mentioned this to her. I told her I would be happy to bring back an extra treatment pack for Z if I could but she told me that he had seen the doctor last week and been informed that Sofosbuvir was going to be approved by the PBS in June and that Z should be able to be treated because his health was pretty bad and because the Interferon treatment had failed. I hope she has got the correct information.

May 6th
A week until I leave for India. Jan and I worrying a bit about whether we had made the right decision as the fare and other costs will have eaten most of our savings. I've only booked to stay a

week there and we worry about if that will be enough time to find the right doctor, the right pharmacist and get the script. I guess it's buyers' remorse because really there is no other choice. The Abbott government is cutting back on medical subsidies of drugs, so a lot of people with cancer and other chronic health issues are going to suffer because they are not going to be able to get the latest, most effective medication. At least, thanks to the Indian government having enough balls to stand up to the Big Pharmaceutical companies, I have a choice, an affordable choice. I know Z's wife said that if he could not get on the Sofosbuvir program soon they might have to sell their house to get the $90,000 for Sofosbuvir. I told her she should just get over to India but she said she had heard that the Indian option was not reliable. That's certainly the opposite of what I heard.

May 7th
Went over to the pub for dinner tonight, there was a good crowd of locals there and the word had got around that I'm off to India next week. Everyone wished me well and hoped that everything worked out. I find it interesting that so many people are scared or ashamed to admit that they have Hep C. Everyone I know knows that I have it and how I got it and everyone has been really supportive and kind. It's great living in such a supportive community.

May 9th
Been battling with exhaustion the last few days and having to an hour or two of sleep mid morning. I can feel that damn virus inside me, slowing me down. I bleed a lot easier from any little cut now, bleed easier and longer. I'm also getting nose bleeds now. Every time I blow my nose I end up with a glob of blood in the handkerchief. Jan reminds me that my blood is dangerous and that I have to be certain I clean it up. She uses bleach on my handkerchiefs.

Glad that I have got the trip booked and there is a good chance I will be rid of this thing in a few months.

One of my neighbours told me that there was a big advertisement in the local newspaper about Hep C while we were up in Byron Bay. I'll have to see if I can find it

May 10th
I'm really noticing that I am bleeding too easily now, the slightest scratch just bleeds and bleeds. Glad I am booked for India this week.

Last night I spend a bit of time Googling along a few different keyword lines and came across an Indian site called dropshipmd.com. This is a company based in Mumbai that sells all of India's generic Sofosbuvir drugs, mostly those licenced by GILEAD. They sell them mail order and they can be purchased by anyone with a prescription. You can also just visit their office in Mumbai and buy the Sofosbuvir over the counter for cash but again one needs to have a prescription with them.

Their prices, US$1,500 for a 12 week course, seem a little higher than the "street price" but that is only on here say because I have not been to India and don't know the actual price. Even at

US$1,500 its a lot cheaper than the $90,000 that the same 12 week course would cost in Australia or the USA. I guess if one can get a co-operative doctor in India to write the script there would be a way of doing the whole transaction without having to fly to India.

I guess I will have a lot more answers this time next week.

May 11th
I have just read a report on the annual costs to the Australian health system of Hepatitis C. At least $300 million per annum, over ten years this is $3 billion minimum.

As there are about 300,000 people with Hep C in Australia the Government could save at least $2 billion dollars by setting up an easy way for people to buy their medication from India. It would not take a lot of imagination to figure out an effective vehicle through which this could occur. It simply needs a couple of doctors hired in India to write prescriptions for their Australian patients, whose details they could receive by email and then have a Skype consultation then write the prescription.

Then a couple of people to buy the generic Sofosbuvir from one of the companies manufacturing it there and organise it to be shipped direct to each individual person with Hep C. Apart from the savings to the Australian health system it would also very quickly end the suffering of 300,000 people now suffering the effects of Hep C.

This entry was originally published on My Hep C Diary. Reprinted with permission.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.