Finding Gratitude in Sickness, Health and Hepatitis

November 19, 2018 By Lucinda K. Porter RN

The smoke is dense here in Northern California. The sun shines faintly, if at all, through the thick haze. However, I am clear about one thing: I am not complaining about the poor air quality. I have a home, and a town, and trees. I did not lose family, friends, pets, or my worldly possessions in a wildfire. I have so very much for which to be grateful.

Sometimes I forget how rich my life is. I was reminded of just this as I spoke with two fire refugees who are staying in my town. They lost everything, except the most important things—they still have their lives and their loved ones.

Sometimes I forget to be grateful. I get impatient with the slow pace of making sweeping changes regarding hepatitis C. But this too shows a lack of perspective on my part. Last week's liver meeting helped to realign my perspective. Here is some of the good news that was announced:

- Harvoni is safe for 3- to 5-year-olds with hepatitis C. Until now, the only options for children under age 12 who have hepatitis C were peginterferon treatment or wait until they were teens. I imagine that parents of these youngsters were happy to see this study.
- Research shows that hepatitis C treatment can be shortened in 50 percent of patients. The cost of treatment has created tremendous resistance on the part of payers, which has led to access issues. Theoretically, this removes or lowers the barrier to treatment.
- People who inject drugs (PWID) who have hepatitis C virus can be cured even when treatment adherence is imperfect. This is critical information. Hepatitis C elimination rests on our ability to treat PWID.
- The Medicines Patent Pool signed an agreement with AbbVie to expand access to hepatitis C treatment. Here is the Medicines Patent Pool press release:

The Medicines Patent Pool (MPP) has today announced a new, royalty-free license agreement with AbbVie for glecaprevir/pibrentasvir (G/P) - a World Health Organization (WHO)-recommended

treatment for people living with chronic hepatitis C (HCV). The license will enable quality-assured manufacturers to develop and sell generic medicines containing G/P in 99 low- and middle-income countries and territories at affordable prices, enabling access to and treatment scale-up with the most effective pan-genotypic regimens.

All this good news brings me back to gratitude. Although gratitude is a frequent topic around Thanksgiving, gratitude is a year-round opportunity. Noted gratitude researcher Robert Emmons said, “Scientists are latecomers to the concept of gratitude. Through conducting highly focused, cutting-edge studies on the nature of gratitude, its causes, and its consequences, we hope to shed important scientific light on this important concept.”

I am not waiting for research to tell me what I already know. Gratitude feels great. I don’t need to lose my home and my possessions in order to appreciate my precious life.

Thank you for your readership and support. Happy Thanksgiving.

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