Heading to the 2016 EASL Conference

April 6, 2016 By Greg Jefferys

I'm sitting in an airplane high above the central Australian desert. The pilot announced few minutes ago that we had just flown over Uluru, the huge red monolith that is the spiritual center of Australia.
It is nearly a year ago that I was sitting in another plane flying over central Australia on my way to Chennai in India on my quest to find and buy generic Sofosbuvir.

So much has changed since then.

Back then, a year ago, my body was wracked with the Hepatitis C virus. My liver was quite rapidly being destroyed. My ALT was around 800 and the doctors thought I might have liver cancer. If I received the slightest bump I bruised. If I got the smallest scratch I bled and was slow healing. My nose bled if I sneezed.

My brain was in a fog caused by my poor liver functions.

I was exhausted most of the time and spent hours in bed every day. I was rapidly approaching cirrhosis. My eyes had a slight yellow colour to them. My blood was poison and even my wife was scared of accidentally coming in contact with a drop of my blood.
I was scared to play with my grandson in case I infected him.
In a nutshell I was sick and getting sicker by the day.

Things are different now, on this flight.
Today the Hep C virus is gone, has been gone for more than 8 months. My health has returned on all levels.
I don't bleed or bruise all the time, my head is clear and my thoughts are coherent. I can walk for hours in the mountains or swim for hours in the sea.
Now instead of flying to Chennai to find a cure for my disease I am flying to Spain, to share the news of my cure. To Barcelona, to attend the annual EASL Conference and talk about how important generic Hep C medicines are for the tens of millions of people across the world with Hep C. To talk about it with the liver specialists, many of whom are watching patients die because they can not access these new Hep C medicines because of the prohibitive costs.

The paper that I co-authored with Dr James Freeman and others will be presented by Dr Freeman at the conference and I sincerely hope that it will make medical professionals, particularly liver specialists, aware of then importance of generics, particularly licensed Indian generic Hep C med's.

It is kind of ironic for me because much of my reading last year was of the papers presented at the 2015 EASL conference. The papers that presented the most recent and up-to-date test results for treating different Hep C genotypes with different combinations of the new Hep C antiviral drugs.

It was a steep learning curve for me because until August 2014 I did not even know what Hepatitis C was. Suddenly Hep C became my world.
Fortunately I enjoy research and managed to bring myself up to speed on the latest test results and treatment options thanks to the online publication of the 2015 EASL papers.

Now I am off to hear a report presented at the 2016 EASL Conference that I was able, in a small way, to contribute to.

Life is strange

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http://beta.docker.hepmag.com/blog/heading-2016-easl-conference