The Hepatitis C Situation in New Zealand

March 22, 2016 By Greg Jefferys

Today will be an interesting day for me because a television show about the Hepatitis C situation in New Zealand will go to air on NZ TV's highly regarded Sunday current affairs program.

NZ television sent a crew over to Tasmania to film and interview Dr Freeman and myself about our work helping people access generic Harvoni and Daclatasvir and other generic Hep C medicines. In a couple of hours the program will go to air and it will be interesting to see what form it takes and how they portray the situation and the key players.

Fortis Hospital in India: A Review.
Over time I had a lot of feed back about different hospitals and doctors in India from people who have decided to not only go to India to buy generic Hep C medicines but also to undergo treatment and testing. This is a good option for many people as Indian medical services are of a very high standard. The doctor I saw was trained in the UK and also practiced there as a specialist for many years before returning to India.
As well as highly trained doctors tests and procedures are much cheaper in India than most other places, often one tenth or less the cost of Western countries.

Of all the feedback I have received the Fortis Hospital is consistently the most highly regarded. I have never had one bad comment and many, many people have written about the high standard of treatment and care.

Below is recently received report:

Dear Greg,

I hope this email finds you in good health and spirit.

I am writing to update you on the progress of obtaining the Harvoni medication for my husband. It's been two months since I last communicated with you and am pleased to inform you that the medicine has been successfully purchased in India.

After contacting all the contacts and recommendations you gave, we had chosen to go with Dr. Mohinish Chhabra of Fortis Mohali, Chandigarh, Punjab, India. Initially, we had wanted to go with Global Hospital, Chennai but the doctor recommended my husband to undergo a liver transplant, which was not an option for my him (for many obvious reasons; surgical risk, invasive procedure, challenge in finding a suitable donor, etc.). Our communication with Apollo Hospital did not produce satisfactory result. The doctor did not offer much opinion or advice apart from agreeing to meet with us. While the other pharmaceutical

representatives were very responsive, we felt more comfortable to meet a certified doctor who can prescribe the medicine.

Dr. Chhabra and his team of staff from Fortis Hospital were an obvious choice in the end. They were extremely responsive and efficient. We even managed to schedule a skype consultation and Dr. Chhabra was able to offer his advice and opinion after reviewing my husband's medical results which were sent to him via email. We were able to obtain the answers for all our query quickly; travel arrangement, booking of appointment, cost of the medicine, letter for visa application, etc.

Although Fortis Mohali is situated about 5 hours away from New Delhi (north of Delhi, in the Punjab region) via road, the hospital provided good service throughout the way and ensured I got there on time for my appointment. I had gone to the hospital without my husband because Dr. Chhabra advised my husband not to travel due to his condition (by that time, he has severe irritable bowel syndrome and lethargy). I was picked up from the hotel in New Delhi in a comfortable MPV (about 6000 rupee/US$89) directly to the hospital.

I left at 8:30am and arrived at Fortis Mohali around 1:30pm.

I stayed at Fortis Inn (the hotel at the hospital which costs 4,400 rupee/US$65/night for a modest twin-bed deluxe room with en suite shower) which was very convenient. The liaison person, Ms. Kiran was just amazing and assisted me to check-in and meet Dr. Chhabra around 2pm (my appointment was 3:25pm). Dr. Chhabra was easy to talk to. He was a good listener and wrote his opinion and recommendation for me to take to my husband's doctor in ######.
I like the fact that he did not even ask me to buy any other medicine other than what I had come for although he suggested that I should consult the doctor in ###### on the other recommended drugs (to address the IBS, acid reflux, blood pressure, etc.) By 2:30pm, I was done and all I had to do was wait for the medicine which was brought to me by the Mylan representatives.

My consultation with Dr. Chhabra including registration fee was only 1100 rupee (US$16) and I paid the Mylan person a total of 171,600 rupee (US$2,559) for six months supply of Ledipasvir+Sofosbuvir (generic Harvoni) and Ribavirin (6 tablets/day). The Harvoni itself costs 150,000 rupee (US$2,237)

My trip there was a lot smoother than what I had anticipated. It had taken me less than 3 days to sort everything out. I would highly recommend Fortis Mohali to anyone seeking to buy medicine for hep C. They were professional in every step of the way and I literally have no complaint about them (if there is any shortcoming, access to wifi at Fortis Inn was the only problem).

My husband has started on the Harvoni pill on Monday, along other meds like spironolactone (to overcome edema and hypertension) and propranolol (blood pressure to prevent the rupture of his aesophagus). He has decided not to take the ribavarin after consulting his doctor in Malaysia. We were informed that the side effects of Ribavirin (low haemoglobin count which could result in hemorrhaging) outweighs the increase of up to only 2% success anti-viral rate when combined with Harvoni for Genotype #. Dr. Chhabra concurred and said that if the side effects of Ribavirin is too much, he can stop taking them.

We are yet to see any physical improvement (according to Dr. Chhabra, he sees a huge improvement on one of his patients who has similar condition as my husband - decompensated cirrhosis, after 4 weeks) although I think there is an improvement in his spirit. So, keeping fingers crossed.

I hope this information is useful for you and you may share them with other patients who are in similar situation and would like to consider Fortis Mohali.

I wish you well and thank you for all your help. Without them, we wouldn’t know how to start.

Warmest regards,
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