Hepatitis C: SVR24 achievement unlocked!

March 31, 2016 By Grace Campbell

My hepatitis C treatment is bookended by this view.

On the 22nd of March 2015 I travelled to St Vincents Hospital in Sydney to start treatment for hep C. This treatment was thanks to a compassionate access program run by AbbVie and it allowed me to access direct acting antivirals a year ahead of the majority of people living with HCV in Australia. I was sick. Very sick in fact. My brain and body just refused to acknowledge or accept it.

I stayed in the hotel in the picture above. I collected my tablets from the hospital dispensary on the 22nd, took them back to the hotel and took my first tablets on the morning of the 23rd.

Thus started a six month daily regime of tablets, tablets and more tablets. Every day, twice a day. I took my last tablets in September and my 12 week post treatment blood test in December. I was told I'd reached SVR12 on the 7th of December.

The 12 week post treatment test is the one most doctors now call the "gold standard". Clear at that one and you're pretty much home and hosed. The rate of relapse after 12 weeks is tiny. Teeny tiny. But teeny tiny means there is a chance, no matter how slim, so we old hands like to wait for our 24 week post treatment results before we break out the Faux Cliquot and celebrate.

I went down to Sydney to have the blood tests done and lo and behold I found myself with the same view. I had booked the same hotel, and until I checked in, the delightful serendipity of beginning and ending my treatment at the same place had not occured to me.

My 24 week test came back this week as undetected, which I expected, but still held my breath for. Of course, being me, the results always leave something to work towards. No easy road to success here.

My platelets. Basically they suck. They suck at being better. At being more. At reproducing, or whatever it is that platelets do to have baby platelets. I have so few I could probably give them names right about now. The number quoted is 56. They held kind of low throughout treatment: arund 70 - 80, but they've dropped again.

My INR has been a little more cooperative, dropping from 1.5 to 1.4. Not much, but you have to gather your rosebuds while ye may. I don’t know any more results apart from that. I haven’t seen them yet. I was told that my liver function tests were “normal”. Of course, being me, that normal could mean anything, but I choose to think it means they fall into the actual range established by the fine people at the laboratories that work out such things. Not just “normal for you but don’t forget you are a weirdo”.

So if anyone has any tips for getting my platelets to do the right thing and reproduce like crazy, short of a candlelight dinner for 56 and a romantic getaway I’d love to hear them!

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http://beta.docker.hepmag.com/blog/hepatitis-c-svr24-achievement-unlocked