Hepatitis C: the post treatment waiting game

September 17, 2015 By Grace Campbell

"Hope is the pillar that holds up the world. Hope is the dream of a waking man"
- Pliny the Elder

I've decided that the aprÃ¨s pill taking part of treatment is just as grueling as the pill taking part. It's all waiting without the capacity for any action to directly influence the end result. At least when you are on treatment you are doing something. Sure, you get side effects and have to deal with the rigidity of lifestyle that comes with a structured approach to medication, but it's an active process.

Waiting is just that - waiting. There is nothing you can do anymore that will change the outcome.
So far I am ten days post treatment. I have waited this long to have my end of treatment (EOT) blood tests because today was the date of my EOT appointment. We decided it was easier to have them done at my treating hospital so the lab values were the same as most of my other reports.

My specialist is quietly pleased with progress. Actually, he wasn't quiet at all. He smiled - a lot. He told me the results were what he'd hoped for at this stage of post-treatment. He did a little "touch wood" on his desk as he talked about how the results were good and how he hoped they'd continue that way. More than once.

As he looked back over my file, at one point he stopped, looked at me, looked at the data in front of him and said *"You were very sick. Very sick."*.

Regardless of what I might have been, my latest blood test results are very good.

Throughout treatment I've had results that were all over the place. I started with ALT and AST results of 137 and 185. My GGT was 100. For those who are not fluent in blood test results, those refer to indicators of current liver damage and are up to five times higher than they should be. During treatment my bilirubin results shot up as high as 152 - nearly 9 times higher than normal. I became anaemic with a haemoglobin level of 102. Before I started treatment my albumin was starting to tank.

When I had my week 20 tests, my ALT had reduced to 17, my AST was 23 and my GGT was 25. My bilirubin levels were still 50. My haemoglobin was at its lowest of 102.

Ten days after the last tablet, my ALT is sitting pretty at 18 and my AST and GGT are holding firm at 23

and 25. Those are normal ranges for liver results. Normal! Bilirubin has plummeted to 19. That's only one point outside normal range. Haemoglobin has started to climb and is at 111.

In fact, to cut to the chase, everything in blood chemistry is within normal range except bilirubin (1 point out) and alk phos (a few points out). All the haematology results are coming back towards normal range, too.

This shows a few things: it demonstrates how reactive I was to ribavirin, and how quickly you can recover after treatment. It probably also shows that I was "very sick" as my specialist puts it.

Don't misunderstand me. I know that I need to wait for twelve weeks after treatment to have a definitive answer as to whether it's worked or not. But if you are looking for positive signposts along the way, these results are positive. They are pointing in the right direction.

They give me hope.

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http://beta.docker.hepmag.com/blog/hepatitis-c-the-post