Hepatitis C Treatment: One Month Update

June 19, 2015 By Greg Jefferys

19th of June

Well I've been exactly one month on the medication so I went and had half a dozen vials of blood taken out of my arm for the full blood tests, including viral loads. There were so many vials that on the last one the needle slipped out of my vein and my dangerous blood oozed out all over the place. End of next week for the results.

Side effects

Side effects are pretty minor. Still a bit of insomnia but not too bad, it helps if I am really tired when I go to bed. Also if I have done some hard physical work so that I am physically as well as mentally tired.
Yes I make more mistakes when I am typing and, more often than normal, my memory has a spasm.
Oh and I am not getting irritable, its just that other people are getting more annoying.
So all in all the side effects are pretty much nothing compared to the stories I have heard about the Interferon based treatments.

Fear Mongers and Fear-Mongering

Because of this blog and other stuff that has happened I have become quite involved in a few Hep C forums and have noticed that there is a lot of fear floating around about the idea of buying the sofosbuvir and ribavirin treatment from India. First, there is the fear of being ripped off by an unscrupulous online supplier. Second, there is the fear of breaking some law by importing the sofosbuvir and ribavirin into one's home country.

I have already dealt with the issue of buying sofosbuvir from India and, apart from the people I have recommended there are no doubt other honest online pharmaceutical suppliers in India.

Bringing sofosbuvir into your country for personal use.

Bringing sofosbuvir into Australia for personal use.

The Australian government's position on this is very clear and very accessible. You can acquire Sofosbuvir (and we hope soon generic Harvoni) from either a friend or supplier in India. There is no problem with this. Please read the section of the relevant Act. It's easy reading and very clear.
https://www.tga.gov.au/personal-importation-scheme

Importing sofosbuvir for personal use into the UK or the USA.

Like much of the discussion around sofosbuvir, Sovaldi and the new generation Hep C drugs the discussion about the legality of importing these life saving drugs into one's own country for personal use, is full of fear mongering and false or erroneous information. Particularly in the case of the UK and the USA where the relevant legislation is much harder to locate. However thanks to friends and much Google searching I have pulled a couple of bits of information that will be very useful to people living in the UK and USA.

Firstly bringing Sofosbuvir into the USA for personal use.

For the information of people living in the USA, this is to counter the fear-mongering going around about bringing sofosbuvir into the USA for personal use. Check out the link yourself but these are my thoughts.

http://www.fda.gov/Abou.../Transparency/Basics/ucm194904.htm
The correct interpretation of this bulletin by the FDA is important. This first paragraph (below), by the FDA, summarises the FDA's position:
"FDA has a policy explaining that it typically does not object to personal imports of drugs that FDA has not approved under certain circumstances, including the following situation:"
The following sentences are written by the FDA to further clarify their position. The critical sentence that is often misinterpreted is sentence 2. This sentence means that the importer has no intention of commercialising or promoting the drug to U.S. residents. It does not refer to existing corporate commercialisation or promotion of the drug. In my humble opinion (and the opinion of other more knowledgeable people) this means that a U.S. resident CAN import a three month supply of Sofosbuvir etc. for personal use, from India or wherever else. The USA's position is in total harmony with the position of Australia and the UK.

From the FDA Bulletin:
1.The drug is for use for a serious condition for which effective treatment is not available in the United States (If you cannot afford to buy it then it is not available to you. Greg)
2.There is no commercialization or promotion of the drug to U.S. residents;
3.The drug is considered not to represent an unreasonable risk;
4.The individual importing the drug verifies in writing that it is for his or her own use, and provides contact information for the doctor providing treatment or shows the product is for the continuation of treatment begun in a foreign country; and
5.Generally, not more than a 3-month supply of the drug is imported

Bringing medicine into the UK
Much of the official concern about prescription drugs is directed at internet pharmacies and people selling drugs illegally, and you're unlikely to find yourself in trouble for bringing prescription drugs into Britain. It's not illegal to bring them home, as long as they are for personal use. Even anabolic steroids can be imported for personal use, according to customs officials.
The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) however, will take action if they suspect that people plan to supply medications to others. 'If you are coming back from a country and bringing in huge quantities of medications, then common sense will dictate that you aren't going to get through those medications yourself, therefore you must be planning to sell them on,' says a MHRA spokesperson
If you want to bring medicine into the UK, first check that it is licensed for use. Always carry medicines in a correctly labeled container as issued by the pharmacist. Otherwise, bring a letter from your doctor or a personal health record card giving details of the drug prescribed, in case it is queried by customs or you require additional supplies. Remember that some medicines available over-the-counter in other countries may be controlled in Britain, and vice versa.
For further information please contact HM Customs and Excise Advice Centre, Tel: +44 (0)20 8929 0152
So the upshot of all this seems fairly simple: If the medication is for personal use then it is okay to bring in a three month supply. Generally, it seems wise to have a doctor's prescription as well.
I do not know about other countries but I believe most countries follow a similar philosophy to the UK, USA and Australia (apart from Austria and a few other anal European countries). Check with your local authorities to be sure of your country's regulations.

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