# Hepatitis C: A weekend of watching EASL's Liver Conference

April 17, 2016 By Grace Campbell

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Do you ever get the feeling it's time to just stop, count your blessings and take a moment to appreciate what you have? I had that feeling this weekend.

I spent a lot of time on Twitter following EASL's International Liver Conference in Barcelona this weekend. Because I'm in a completely different time zone I was up late some evenings (okay, MOST evenings) and probably missed a little sleep. Not getting enough sleep leaves me a little zonked. I think that's a verb.

While I was watching the ILC2016 unfold in front of my eyes, a few things crossed my mind.

One was how much I now know about hepatitis C and liver-related issues. A year ago I couldn't have told you what side of the body my liver was on. Now I know definitively it's on the RIGHT. But I also know about HCV treatments, side effects, the drugs involved, what blood tests actually mean, promising treatments ... oh the list goes on. I certainly don't know as much as the health care team that look after me, but when I ask questions now, they are sensible and designed to give me information I need, not just general "what side is my liver on" questions.

Something else that crossed my mind was how fortunate I am to live in a country where the government has legislated universal access for all people with hepatitis C. Reading about the struggles of some people to get access to treatment in their country was very upsetting.

The third things that occured to me was how many advances are being made right now to enhance the lives of people with hep C. There are promising new pangenotypic treatments, treatments with shorter durations, treatments with less side effects. Generics were a hot topic of conversation with the presentation of a late breaker study by fellow Hep blogger Greg Jefferys and Dr James Freeman from FixHepC about the generic-utilising Redemption trials. The presentation garnered quite some interest and it will be interesting to see where things go from here.

So sure, there are days when I worry about my own concerns: my health, those darn platelets, whether my liver is recovering, holding its own or going into a decline. But there are also days when I look at this amazing community I am part of, I see how hard people work to improve the lives of people with hep C, be grateful for the support and help I have gained, and feel empowered

enough to support others.

I think of the things hepatitis C has given me. It’s given me knowledge. It’s given me connections to people. Strangely it’s given me hope. It’s given me the capacity to focus on something other than myself. It’s expanded my world view.

And at the end of the day, it’s given me courage. That’s not a bad thing to have gained.

I wonder what it has given you?

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