One Hepatitis C Patient’s View

January 14, 2013 By Lucinda K. Porter RN

One of the most memorable conversations I ever had was with a patient who had hepatitis C. (He no longer has hepatitis C, having successfully cured it.) It was when I was working as a hepatology nurse at Stanford. Generally, I was accustomed to dealing with wary patients who were skeptical about treatment. Most of my patients were like me--they asked many questions and brought up issues and concerns.

This patient was different. His doctor recommended hepatitis C treatment, telling him about the risks, side effects, and length of treatment. The patient said, “OK. When do I start?” I was somewhat amazed by this reaction, and commented to him that most patients take time to think about it and ask more questions.

The patient replied, “I got hep C from drugs. I didn’t ask my dealer about the quality of the stuff, what it would do to me, or anything. I figure my doctor is a lot more trustworthy than my drug dealer was, so why wouldn’t I take his advice?”

I think of this patient whenever I feel like defying “doctor’s orders.”

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