When Hepatitis C Makes Me Cry

October 21, 2013 By Lucinda K. Porter RN

Some may think that I am odd, but when I cry about hepatitis C, it isn't because I have it; I cry because you have it. I am fortunate to be a nurse, to have been given all the hepatitis C knowledge I have. I've been surrounded with wonderful mentors and patients who taught me how to live with and manage this disease. For more than 15 years, my work has been hepatitis C. I wish this reason didn't exist, but it does, and I appreciate the chance to make a difference.

It has been easy for me to bear hepatitis C. It is not easy for me to bear witness of hepatitis C in others. The first time I saw someone die from it was when I was in nursing school. The third day of my hospital rotation, I was assigned to a thirty-five year old woman with end-stage liver disease caused by alcohol abuse and non-A, non-B hepatitis. She was alert and communicative. Two days later, she was dead. I still remember her face and her name.

I have lost count of the number of people I know who have died from hepatitis C. It never gets easier. In fact, it hurts more now than ever since after 15 years of hepatitis C activism, I ache over the needlessness of it all. We had a chance to learn something from HIV and yet we didn't learn enough, soon enough.

I will spare you the long list of things we could do, particularly regarding healthcare in the United States--after all, we are all bruised from the recent government shutdown. However, despite limited funding, patients, organizations, and companies are making a huge difference. No one is sitting around waiting for money in order to act. We are acting anyway.

My writing is my attempt to make a difference. I've written two books, the newest being *Hepatitis C Treatment One Step at a Time*. It is the book I've wanted to write for more than ten years. When I worked at Stanford with hepatitis C patients, we were on a journey together. I was by patients' sides during their liver biopsies. I taught them how to manage their medication and I stayed with them through their treatment. I felt like a coach. Not only did I believe in their ability to make it through hepatitis C treatment, I could show them how.

It was a privilege to share my hepatitis C knowledge with my patients, but I want to reach more people. My goal in writing *Hepatitis C Treatment One Step at a Time* was to offer to readers what I could offer to the patients I worked with directly. It is my way of saying, "You can do this and here is how."

Hepatitis C Treatment One Step at a Time provides daily entries offering a quote, encouragement, and practical tips to help patients stay on track. The book tells you how to prepare for hepatitis C treatment and what to do while waiting for results. *Hepatitis C Treatment One Step at a Time* is modifiable for any length and type of treatment, including clinical trial participation.

I believe that my first book, *Free from Hepatitis C* is a perfect companion for my new book. It is a good reference book to have on hand, especially for those considering or undergoing hepatitis C treatment. Both are available on Amazon - each priced at about the cost of two packs of cigarettes, which I am hoping you have given up or will be soon.

I hope this book will save some lives, because I am tired of crying.