

PDQ – with a middle aged patient, with Hodgkin's-lymphoma

The patient tells me about how long it took for the illness to be discovered. The symptoms were too general to be connected to any specific condition, the main symptom being high fever, thus she was sent to different departments for all sorts of invasive and less-invasive examinations. It was only when she was by mistake to the cardiology department instead of the general internal medicine department that her more organised and systematic treatment started and it was this staff who managed to discover the real cause behind the symptoms.

During the whole process she felt losing control. She felt that she was simply undergoing the process, without actually deciding for herself. It was only partly because of her condition, however. Another, significant part was due to the attitude of the healthcare personnel and this made her suffer psychologically, too, over her physical difficulties.

Now, with the diagnosis defined, her perception of her own condition is a bit better. While still very much concerned with the prospects of being cured, she feels a bit better. She has been able to go home and stay there, it means a lot for her. After the outpatient chemotherapy treatment days there are several bad days, yet, it gives her comfort that she can be in her own, well-known environment. When her condition improves she can also meet her friends and family, something that was missing from her life during the long months at hospital.

She tells me that she likes reading a lot, but when she was very sick, she had no patience or willingness to open a book. Her main interest are historic novels. Every now and then she also meets her friends, they get together and spend some hours sharing a delicious meal and enjoying each other's company.

She knows that she can rely on her family and it has meant a lot for her that they have been supporting her and there for her since the beginning of her condition. It has been a long journey so far and she can only hope that it will end with her being fully recovered.

What worries her the most is the option in which her condition cannot be improved and she needs to be fully hospitalised again. She also dreads the idea of being completely bedridden and being incompetent and unable to manage her situation. She does not want to suffer from pain, it would significantly worsen her quality of life, she thinks.