

Anxiety 2404

Sunday:

Suddenly, after standing up I felt as though I was about to fall. Things were spinning around. I sat down and waited. I did this and that, as one does sometimes. It was cold so I decided to lay on the bed. I did so in my usual time, rather too quickly as it turned out. My head was spinning or was it the room. Either way, I was alarmed. Is that what growing old is going to be like?

I decided to call for an ambulance, nothing like this has happened to me before. I felt as though I had lost consciousness for a short period, just seconds, not minutes, just for a few seconds, you understand.

I dialled 999. I explained what had happened. I had to answer questions like, "Is the patient conscious?"

"Yes, I am!"

I explained what had happened to me.

This is not urgent dial 111, I was told.

"I did that and was told "You are number 10 in the queue."

I waited.

"You are number 9 in the queue."

That was repeated again and again, multiple times.

After 6 or 7 times I decided to call 999 again.

I was again told my symptoms couldn't be classified as an emergency.

I turned my head and felt as though I was losing consciousness. I fell off my chair onto the floor. I came to after a few seconds but my head was spinning. After a while, I tried to stand but I couldn't. I was too dizzy. I

crawled to the front door and opened it slightly whilst still on my knees. I put the snake around the base of the front door. I felt sick and vomited. I crawled back into my living and sleeping room. I noticed that the phone was dangling over my computer desk. I was feeling sick. I couldn't climb onto my bed. I pulled the duvet off my bed and covered myself with it. Not long afterwards, I heard a voice at the door. It was the ambulance crew.

“Pull the snake away from the door I tried to call out.”

The crew seemed to understand me and came in. I tried to explain what had happened to me. They asked the usual questions and did some tests. The male ambulanceman noticed my phone was off the hook and replaced the receiver. Eventually, I was told that I was going to be taken to the hospital.

I was helped outside and promptly threw up, six or seven times. All my dinner and more by looks was splattered on the parking area. I was told to walk around my vomit as though I was going to trample on it before I got into the ambulance. They did more tests and I was taken to the hospital. I was put on a bed. Eventually, I was interviewed again.

You don't want to hear my responses again, do you? If you do, start from the beginning to recap.

A 90 year old man was having his cavity connection replaced. He was screaming. “Stop it! You're hurting me. I'm 90. I don't want to live anymore.”

And he had been calling out for a nurse for medical attention. The doctor completed the procedure and said she was going to prescribe some antibiotics because he had an infection there.

How it must have hurt.

The doctor moved on.

A doctor came to see me.

I was asked more questions.

The ambulance crew had classified me as a hoarder. I was on the floor between my computer desk and my bed. How big do they think homes for single people are these days.

Was that why I was here? The ambulance crew had witnessed me vomiting!

I was asked more questions.

There were buzzers going left right and centre and people shouting for a nurse.

The hospital was busy. I was transferred to another section.

I didn't sleep at all that night.

Monday:

I was transferred to another ward for physical-therapy. It was a four bed room with two nurses in charge

A female nurse was talking to a man.

"Wait here for me."

"I want to go home."

"Do you want me to start crying?"

"No, but I must get home. My car is outside."

“Wait here, don’t let me down please. My relief will be here, shortly.”

And so the conversation carried on.

A female nurse was following a confused man around both the ward and the corridors.

“Don’t go into that room. It’s not allowed.”

I guess he was in danger of wandering off.

I was asked what I wanted for breakfast.

I was brought some food. I had a bowl of cornflakes and a carton of orange juice. I am dairy intolerant. I ate my breakfast cereal.

I asked the female nurse for some water. She went away.

I started to cough soon afterwards.

I walked into the direction I heard her leave in.

I heard voices and called out, “Can you bring me some water, I’m choking.” Whenever I get a speck of dust in my throat I start coughing and need a drink.

“I’m not going to run for you. I don’t like being shouted at. You’re a racist shouting at me like that. I’m going to report you.”

She put the jug of water down on my hospital food trolley.

I took a drink. I heard her typing away.

The physiotherapist came in and talked to me. He said they were short staffed.

I didn’t get any physio exercises to do, nor were they demonstrated to me.

A European patient was told he would get some methadone in an hour or so. He kept clicking on something by his bed.

I was waiting and trying to work out what was going on.

I had something to eat. Chicken and something or other.

I should have chosen something else. Or perhaps I shouldn't have.

At 8pm the confused man was taken to another ward.

I tried to put my shirt over my eyes. The bright overhead lights weren't going into my eyes but I still couldn't sleep. Even after 10pm. when the lights were turned off.

Tuesday:

A lady from a charity came to see the European. He was taken off the streets and taken to the hospital. He had been taking £60 worth of morphine a day. Hence, the dose of Methadone. He was living on the streets and presumably begging. He also had a cancerous growth in his neck. He hadn't leave to stay in Britain. The charity worker said she would try to get him a lawyer to try to get something sorted out. His immigration status was not in her remit and she left.

He was later given some morphine. I guess they were trying to tease him off morphine, gradually. I'm neutral on that matter. If the government wanted to stop the import of illegal drugs they could. It costs money and the Conservatives want to give their supporters some tax cuts. 12 times the amount gained by the cut in Insurance tax is given to the rich than to the working class.

I really did see a lot of medics. The physio asked a lot of questions:
“When was the First World War?”

“1914 to 1918. And the Second war was from 1939 to 1945.”

“What time of day do you think it is?”

“Well, you know how time travels when you’re in hospital? You don’t!
Neither do I. Besides, I don’t have a watch.”

At home, I have two talking clocks, one for British Summer-Time, the other for winter daylight saving time, or whatever it’s called.

I took a guess. “10.30,” I said.

“That’s close enough!”

“What hospital are you in?”

I told him.

There were more trivial questions, too trivial to remember.

The physio said he would come back after the registrar had seen me. He didn’t. Another two did, however. They asked me to start walking. I took hold of my white cane and unravelled it. I walked into the direction I heard the nurse who got me some water went in.

“Don’t walk so fast!” one of them exclaimed.

I slowed down. I was guided onto a landing. I was instructed to climb the stairs. Two flights of stairs and down again. Such is life.

I was seen by a doctor. He held my hand as he spoke to me. He had large hands. I had to concentrate on what he was saying and not on how large his hands were.

He asked me to look straight ahead, which I did. He took hold of my head and turned it 45 degrees to the left. I had to lie down on my side for one minute.

“Sit up straight and look forward.”

He took hold of my head again and positioned it 45 degrees to the right and I had to lean over until I was on the mattress.

As I touched down on the mattress my head was spinning, or was it the things I was looking at.

“I think you’re getting somewhere,” I said.

I thought he was Middle Eastern. But I wasn’t sure. He was very nice and knew what he was doing.

I had to stay in that position for 1 minute. I was told to sit upright again and look straight ahead, which I did.

He left soon afterwards as the Registrar was on his way.

The Registrar came and asked who I thought he was.

“The Registrar,” I said. Now, I’m not sure whether it was the doctor with large hands or the Registrar, or both of them, who told me I had crystals in my inner ear that had come adrift and were floating around. They were the cause of me losing my balance.

They gave me the prognosis! It was four words long, ending in the word, Vertigo.

I couldn’t remember the damn name so I rechristened it: VERTigo Crystal Acropolis. Because: I was suffering from vertigo, there were crystals in one of my inner ears, or both of them and I couldn’t stand upright like the pillars on the Acropolis. And it was all Greek and Latin to me.

I had to wait for my medication, my discharge papers and for my arm band to be taken off. Not to mention transport.

It took forever. Well, not quite, forever but you know what I mean. Otherwise, I would still be waiting.

A new patient was wheeled in. He was placed in the space next to mine. The European was opposite and a bed was wheeled in opposite the new patient.

Lunch was ordered. I chose chicken and barley. As I was eating it I heard the new patient, coughing and choking with each mouthful whilst eating.

I thought a nurse should be there helping him if he couldn’t swallow properly, if that is, he should be eating at all.

There weren't any nurses on duty in the room or ward.

I went into the hallway and asked someone if she was a nurse. She wasn't. She was the dinner lady. She came into the ward and rang the European's bell for a nurse.

A nurse came in and asked what he wanted.

I said, I asked for you to be called because the guy next to me is having difficulty in eating.

He coughed and made a choking sound.

The nurse turned to him and said, "You shouldn't be eating at all, Johnny."

She grabbed the tray of food from him, put it aside and said, "You should be taking food by plug."

I think that meant a tube that went straight into his stomach. She turned to me and said, "You've saved his life, you have."

Both the European and Johnny could hardly speak.

Sometimes I would tell the nurses what I thought the two said. It wasn't long before they asked me to be their interpreter. Of course, I didn't get it all right.

The nurse came up to me and said, "I want to ask you a question."

I asked her to ask it.

“Later, not now,” she said.

I received a diagram of the exercise I had to do.

I received my discharge papers.

My prescription eventually came.

The nurse came over towards me and asked, “How did you know he was struggling with his eating?”

“Because I could hear him coughing and choking.”

“You saved his life you did,” she repeated.

I had to go to the toilet a few times. I was constipated and couldn't let go of anything. At my last attempt I put my thumb on the toilet seat and sat down. My thumb was on the porcelain rim of the toilet and my thumb was caught by the rim of the plastic seat.

I yelled. It hurt! Everyone in the ward must have heard me. The bathroom was in the corner of the room. How embarrassing, I thought as I re-entered the ward.

At 8.30pm. the transport came. I needed transport because I was only wearing a shirt on my upper body when I got into the ambulance. I gathered up my belongings, such as they were. My medication, take two three times a day. My papers, which also had the name of my condition on it. My toothbrush and toothpaste. A pair of socks with rubber bumps on them so I wouldn't slip around the floor whilst exercising.

A Rastafarian came to escort me to the hospital transport vehicle. He put his arm around mine and started walking.

“Are we getting married?” I enquired.

He laughed.

“Can I hold your elbow?” I requested.

”Of course.”

“If you hold mine you can put pressure on my elbow, with your thumb or fingers. That’s the way I like to be guided around corners,” said I.

There were other patients in the transport vehicle. I said hello and we were off. I only lived five bus stops away so I was the first to leave the vehicle.

I asked the driver to take me to the door and wait until I let myself in, which he did. As soon as I was in my home I had to brush up the vomit I had thrown up. After which, I went to bed. I needed some sleep.

Post Script:

As for the right wording for the condition:

Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo.

Can you believe it!

The crystals are called Otoconia, which ought to be attached to the Utricle sensory organ in the inner ear. The condition occurs when they become loose and are floating around in there.