

A much awaited diagnosis

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I was born in the ninth month of the eighty eighth year of the 20th Century and the doctor diagnosed me “neonatal jaundice” at the time of birth. My serum bilirubin was 14 and the doctor told that it was necessary to get the blood transfusion done as early as possible. But it was a miracle that happened to me, my serum bilirubin level came down although it was not within the normal range but the doctor decided to give phototherapy to me and fortunately it worked. I started recovering tremendously and was no more a sick baby.



Fig 1: Priyanka Rawat- My story

But I used to experience abdominal cramps and loose motions quite often. For years it continued and I never paid any attention to my symptoms. After few years I started having constipation without

any rhyme or reason. I used to manually evacuate my stool and also used to pressurize and strain my rectum to a large extent. Despite of all my efforts which included excessive straining of the rectum I was unable to defecate without using my finger. My stool was very often streaked with blood and mucus. When I consulted a general physician at a leading hospital in Delhi, he advised some medicine to me which gave me relief but that too for a short time span. I made it my habit to defecate manually.

As time Progressed the urge to pass stool started decreasing and ultimately I used to strain my rectum and make use of the digits of my hand to get rid of the stool. You may very well imagine how it feels to spend hours and hours in the toilet to defecate by pressurizing and straining your rectum.

In the year 2001, fortunately I happened to meet Dr. Nayyar who was a specialist (Gastroenterology) and he recommended getting the colonoscopy done.

The colonoscopy was done by Dr. Nayyar himself and he diagnosed me “Irritable Bowel Syndrome” and prescribed some medications to me. I used to take all the medicine on time without fail and after a long period of two and a half years

felt that I was not getting any benefit from the medicines which the doctor prescribed to me. Again, I went to the hospital and narrated my story to him. He said that as I was in grade 10 and was stressed regarding my board exams, I was unable to draw benefit from the medicines which he prescribed to me. I knew that it was not the real thing but then also believed his words as he was a renowned doctor. I continued taking the medicines for a short period of time and ultimately stopped taking them. I was once again about to discuss my problem which was increasing day by day but Dr. Nayyar settled in abroad and never planned to come back to India. I was extremely frustrated to an extent that I started starving for days and then for weeks. I used to fear that if I am going to have my food then the very next morning I will have to again defecate manually. There was no one who could reduce my pain. I used to bleed from my rectum but it was in the fourth year of the 21st Century when I experienced severe bleeding from my rectum. The bleeding was so severe that I decided to consult a gastroenterologist at G.B. Pant Hospital (Delhi). There the doctor advised me to get a proctosigmoidoscopy done in order to detect what was the real cause of the bleeding from my rectum. On June 7th, 2004 Dr. V.C. Malhotra did my proctosigmoidoscopy and came to a conclusion that I was having grade II piles. But frankly speaking I never paid any attention towards my piles because for me to evacuate my stool manually in the

morning was a bigger problem. The doctor explained that due to excessive straining of the rectum the piles were developed. Dr. Malhotra recommended me to consult a surgeon but I took his words lightly and chose not to consult a surgeon.

But my problem of evacuating the stool manually was blown up because of the piles. I was unable to find a doctor who would actually understand my pain. The doctors used to think that I was more troubled with constipation but it was not the truth rather I was unable to feel the urge of passing the stool and used to end by defecating manually. For years I kept the pain inside me. There was no one who would heal my wounds. I tried everything ranging from Isapgol to livoluk but never got any relief.



Fig 3: Patient's pain and agony

It was a sunny day in 2007 and I was coming back to home. I didn't have anything in the breakfast and was quite busy during the entire day and had no time to have my

lunch. While I was on my way back to home I stopped at any eating junction and had whatever was available at that moment.

I reached home at around quarter to six in the evening and after an hour my stomach started paining badly. I took a pain killer but it also didn't work to relief my pain. The next day I went to Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital (in Delhi) and met Dr. Sanjeev Sachdeva (Gastroenterologist). I narrated the whole story of my pain and agony and he understood it very well. I remember it vividly how he drew the structure of the colon (large intestine) and made me understand the problem which he expected I may be having. Dr. Sachdeva then recommended several tests which would decide what the real problem was. But unfortunately the tests were not available in a metropolitan city like Delhi, where I live. He advised me to visit Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGIMS) in Lucknow and meet Dr. U.C. Ghoshal. I considered Dr. Ghoshal a ray of hope and had high expectations from him. I went to (SGPGIMS) in May, 2008 and met him. All the tests which were recommended by both the gastroenterologists (Dr. Sachdeva and Dr. Ghoshal) were done. The tests included "anorectal manometry, defecography, ballon expulsion test" and last but not the least "colonic transit time study". The reports of the several tests which were done came and ultimately Dr. Ghoshal diagnosed me "Anismus" which is a kind of fecal evacuation disorder. It results

in extreme contraction of the external anal sphincter. The moment I heard that I was having "Anismus" I was shocked but at the same time was waiting for the event to take place. I gave my self time to settle down and accept the reality. Dr. Ghoshal started making me aware of the treatment option available for treating anismus. One of the treatment options is "Biofeed back Therapy" in which the patient is made to learn how to relax the muscles of the rectum during defecation.

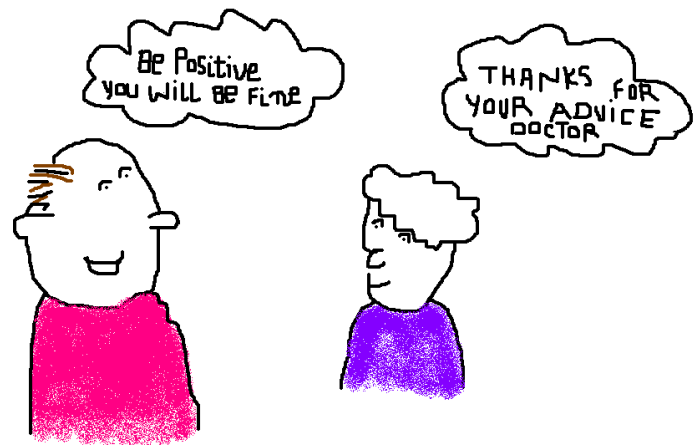


Fig 3: A stable doctor patient relationship

The doctor advised me that I should try biofeed back for once as it will not harm me in any way and it doesn't have any side effects too. He told me that there are patients who are doing better just because of biofeedback but I was denying the fact that it was beneficial for patients like me. I thought that how it can be possible that a simple therapy is capable of making the condition of the patients suffering from anismus better. I was under

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the impression that for me biofeed back will do no wonders but it was my respectable gastroenterologist who convinced me to try biofeed back. I again visited SGPGIMS in June last year and attended my biofeed back therapy sessions there. Dr. Asha Misra, who is the therapist, explained all the instructions and the manner in which the therapy would be given to me in an elaborated way. Help was forthcoming from my therapist's side. She advised me to practice biofeed back on daily basis when I would return back to my beloved metro city. I practiced it regularly without fail and started appreciating the benefits of the biofeed back therapy. My sincerest thanks to my doctors and the therapist with whose help I started believing the power of a simple therapy which can do wonders for patients who are experiencing the same pain which I am also experiencing.

Now I think that biofeed back is the only treatment of anismus but unfortunately it is not widely available in our country. You may be astonished to know that such facility is not even available in Delhi's most reputed and renowned hospitals. One such hospital is SGPGIMS which is a ray of hope for patients with anismus who think that their condition may become better just because of biofeedback therapy. It is important for the patients to develop trust and faith and then go for biofeed back sessions because it is then only the patients will draw benefits out of it. Trust is needed from the patient's side to get sure and expected results

from the biofeed back therapy sessions.

You are not alone in this beautiful world who is suffering from anismus; there are other individuals who are sharing the same pain with you. You need to learn an art of managing your condition so that it doesn't hinder in your growth and development. You should not let your disease dictate your life rather you should take initiative to find ways by which you can reduce your pain and live a satisfying life. Always remember life is all about making your wishes come true so go ahead and chase the most nurtured dreams of your heart without letting your disease take command of your precious life.

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