



A PATIENT ONE YEAR ON: WRITTEN IN 2010

After almost a year to the day; spending most of my time travelling to and from hospital or undergoing some sort of surgical procedure ; I wanted to draft some notes about the treatments I have received and some of the affects to my personal life as a result of these treatments and procedures.

Background

I was admitted to ***** for an insisional hernia operation which was for an injury sustained whilst working in ***** for the*****.

I have lost count now of the number of actual operations I have had but I must be very close to double figures by now, and with those operations countless visits to hospital outpatient appointments; all too many to mention each individually. So I have summarized my experience and feelings about the year as a whole.

Actual hospital treatments

Having had a number of surgical procedures which included insertion of mesh repair to insisional hernia through to secondary wound healing procedures with a VAC to skin grafts, I can honestly say that the level of nursing and after care treatments was very good and on occasion excellent. However there are always some things that don't quite go to plan and may need to be addressed in the future so they do not arise again.

After my initial operation on *****09, all seemed to go well and the insertion of the mesh to repair the hernia went according to plan. I was released after 5 days post surgery to report to my local GP after a further 2 weeks to get the staples removed. The wound was dressed with hypafix tape and some non-woven dressings which seemed to be adequate at the time. However the wound was constantly weeping and started to become worse after a

period of 3-4 weeks. I attended the hospital a number of times during this period to get the dressing changed, each time seeing different nursing staff. As a result of this there seemed to be little continuity in the types of dressing applied; with each nurse using what they felt appropriate to deal with the wound at the time.

After a period of around 7 weeks small blisters started to appear along the incision area and these were treated as above with hypafix tape and non-woven dressing. Also during this period swabs were taken from the wound/blister area and sent for analysis. These swabs came back with a positive MRSA infection to the wound. Silver Aquacel was used direct onto the wound to combat this MRSA bug and again hypafix tape and non-woven dressings were applied.

The skin around the wound area was becoming very red and sore as a result of using the hypafix tape however there was little else they could use to dress the wound with, even opsite post-op dressing caused the area to itch and react adversely.

Throughout the period *****to***** 09 I was seen and treated on 17 different occasions sometimes by a Surgeon or Registrar and on occasions by the staff nurse on duty at the time of attending. Each time I was seen the wound was becoming larger and my skin more inflamed due to the constant application of differing tapes and plasters to the wound area.

I feel that as a result of this prolonged treatment and ever changing nursing staff; the wound was never really assessed and treated correctly and it then became so large that I was then referred to a Skin and Plastics Surgeon to try and bring the wound under control and free from contamination.

I was then admitted to *****on *****09 under a different surgeon, to try and get the wound under control and healing again. I was kept in hospital confined to a cubicle in the ward as I still had MRSA for a 6 week period. During this time the plan was to clean and flush out the wound, address the remove all the dead/contaminated skin around the wound area then apply a skin graft to close the wound.

Again the nursing staffs on this ward were all extremely competent and managed my stay with them as best they could. The procedures and treatments whilst on this ward were mostly the application of VAC (5 times in total) and dressing of the wound once clean and

free from the MRSA bug. However the skin graft procedure did not go well and I also contracted a new bug called ESBL which I was told is a stronger strain of the MRSA and as a result the antibiotics I was taking were of little use as this new bug counteracted these drugs. After five more operations and surgical procedures the wound was finally closed up and I was well enough to be discharged to go home.

During the VAC applications a lot of my time was spent just sat in my cubicle on the ward reading a book, at one stage I was informed that I may be discharged to go home with the VAC fitted, unfortunately this was not possible as there was no District Staff nurses in my home area that were trained on the application and removal of the VAC machine and also the local health service would not take over the funding of the machine whilst I was at home with it applied. Therefore I had to remain in hospital taking up a valuable bed space when I could have been at home under control of my local nursing staff.

After being discharged to my home on ***** 09, I was to attend an outpatient appointment on ***** 09 to have the stitches removed however these remained in place until ***** 09 when they were finally removed. I had to return to the outpatient department on a further two occasions to remove stitches which had been inadvertently left in place. Again the wound was still seeping quite a lot and I was having a lot of pain from the upper right side of the operation area. I was given a CT scan with contrast to see if there was anything which could be seen that was causing the pain but all seemed to be ok.

Over the next 3 months I paid another 11 visits to the outpatient department for various treatments to the wound and to get dressings applied. These treatments were better in respect of continuity and procedure as the same nurses and staff dealt with my wound each time.

The wound started to develop blisters again exactly the same as back in **** 09 after the first operation to insert the mesh. It was evident that not all was well and that possibly the mesh had become contaminated and as a result was making the wound larger again from the inside. After some consultation between both surgeons who had operated on me it was decided to readmit me into hospital and remove the mesh they had inserted, leaving me still with a large abdominal hernia which would still need repair at some stage.

I was admitted back into*****; on ***** 09 where a joint operation was conducted by both surgeons who had been treating me. The mesh was removed successfully and the wound was closed with staples. I was then discharged from hospital on the ***** 09 and the staples were to be removed on ***** 10. I am currently still attending outpatient appointments as the wound is still not healed completely. It is being dressed with non-woven dressings but no hypafix tape by myself using medication and dressing which I have had to purchase through my GP

I have to constantly wear a neoprene corset now to help in keeping my insides in place and to stop the stretching of the outer skin as I have no stomach lining to keep it in place. I am due to return to the outpatient department on *****2010, to see where we go from here and more than likely start the whole procedure to close my insisional hernia and get me fit enough to go back to work.

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Affect on my personal life

During this year of hospital treatments and outpatient appointments, my life has been put on hold as I am not well enough to go back to work or indeed do very much else. Although now I am in very little pain; I have in the past been through quite some discomfort and had to take pain killers to relieve that pain. I still today take pain killers but only as and when I require them. If I go out for a walk I get tired very quickly and have a loss of stamina and need to rest up after probably after walking for an less than an hour or so. This to someone that has been used to doing quite a lot physical activity is really hard to adjust to.

My trips to and from the hospital although only a short journey by car (3 miles) have sometimes been painful and not to mention costly as each time it cost at least £1.50 minimum to park whilst attending treatments.