





Caroline's HSCT stem cell transplant for MS 2017

A month at Clinica Ruiz in Mexico to stop MS

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Caroline's stem cell odyssey

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Caroline Wyatt HSCT stem cell transplant blog

3 Comments



This is a new beginning. After 24 years of living with MS, and one year after diagnosis, I have been accepted at the Clinica Ruiz in Mexico for a stem cell transplant early in the new year. The treatment itself isn't new, though it is still relatively new for MS. Stem cell transplants, or aHSCT, have been carried out for MS since 1996, and the technique has been refined over the years, and is done at several centres across the world. Dr Basil Sharrack and John Snowden at the Sheffield Hallamshire hospital have been carrying out the UK arm of aHSCT trials that were started by Dr Richard Burt in Chicago, with some remarkable stories of recovery by MS patients after the treatment. I spent several months being tested to see if I was suitable for a stem cell transplant in the UK with the NHS, but was told in November that I don't meet enough of the criteria currently being applied here. I was disappointed, but after talking to several other people with MS who had undergone aHSCT in Sheffield, London, Mexico and Moscow, decided that it was worth a try, and applied to Clinica Ruiz, where many other British patients are heading. Stem cell transplants are the most exciting development for MS in decades, and I am very much hoping that the transplant will work for me. The risks are high, but so are the risks of not doing it. As an optimist, I look at the 70 – 77% success rate for those who have it, and just hope and pray that I am not one of the 20 – 30% for whom it makes little difference. And I prefer not to think at all about what happens if I am one of the 0.8% who die as a result, usually of undiagnosed heart conditions or other kinds of organ failure. So have spent the last few weeks after being unexpectedly offered a cancellation in Mexico dashing around to prepare and ensure that I am ready in time, with new MRI scans, perfect new fillings for my teeth and all the help and advice from family and friends that one could wish for. I think I am almost ready now for the start of this odyssey into the unknown.