

Update for the Airdrie Echo – October 3, 2009

The coma began on September 13th, my sister was placed in an induced coma in Monterrey Mexico with the goal of shutting down the pain receptors in her brain that represent RSD. Her hope was to wake completely free of the debilitating pain - her fear was that she would not! Her husband asked for one hour of reprieve from the incessant pain - we all received a much greater gift!

Fern is out of the coma and I talked on the phone with her last night from her hotel room in Monterrey. Her throat is still extremely sore as she recovers from the ventilator and an infection at the site which makes her sound like she has laryngitis. Her back is stiff from lying in a hospital bed and she is weak (but getting stronger every day). At this point in time, the RSD appears to be completely in remission!!!! YEAHHHHH :)

Dr. Cantu predicts that she will require only 3 booster injections of Ketamine (this is a long cry from the 2 years that was initially projected in terms of boosters) and substantial rehabilitation to learn walking and moving without reinjuring herself as she gets stronger. He also advised that she was the 26th patient in a study that will support 30 prior to going to peer review and a request for FDA approval. IF they have obtained a 60% success rate at the end of the study then the chances are good that the approval will be obtained. Great news for others suffering like my sister was. We don't at this time know where they are at in respect of those percentages, but we think they are well on their way!

Fern had a bit of a long journey through the coma. The treatment was supposed to last for 5 days with the Ketamine, however, she developed an infection in her throat so the coma was maintained while they treated the illness. She was given a lighter sedative to keep her in the coma (one that does not carry as many side effects as the Ketamine produces) for an additional 7 days (a whopping 12 days in coma) - as you can imagine, this was a trying time for family members as we waited.

When she woke last Friday night (September 25th), she was smiling and PAIN FREE from RSD.

Dr Cantu believes that Fern has responded much better than anticipated. She continues to progress by leaps and bounds (although not as quickly as she would like I am sure). She is excited and anxious to get home to her children.

I am attaching a photo taken last Saturday when she moved from Intensive Care to a private room - notice the smile on her face and the pain lines erased!

I would like to express my sincerest thanks to everyone who helped us on this journey to make a miracle happen.

I stand in awe and gratitude for the wonderful hardworking and generous individuals who have helped myself , and my family with the Faith for Fern fundraising campaign. (www.faithforfern.com)

I do believe in miracles:

1) The Miracle represented in the medical community and physicians who discovered that this experiment could work. The Mexico team could not have been more generous with our family - treating my sister with love and compassion through the entire journey and extending that outwards to the family as we waited! (heck they even invited Fern to come back as a tourist in one year's time and they will show her what she has missed in Monterrey, and they were sincere with the invitation)

2) The Miracle we found in the generosity of the human spirit. All those wonderful individuals who heard our plea for help and opened their wallets and their hearts! To all of you, we are ETERNALLY GRATEFUL!

Through the generosity of those who heard our story, we raised \$53,000 to reduce the financial hardships that accompany this disease and its treatment.

During this process, we have talked to many RSD patients who also struggle daily to cope with both the pain and the financial strain of their disease. As a result, it is our goal to consider turning our efforts into a longer term 'foundation of hope'. If you would be interested in participating with such a project to help others as we have been helped, please get in touch with us.

Donations continue to be gratefully accepted as Fern completes the study requirements - including travel again to Tampa in 6 weeks to see Dr. Kirkpatrick (where it all began). It will be a long slow process, but one that will be much easier being PAIN FREE.

As we move forward on this journey, may I raise a toast in recognition to all of you who chose to help our family turn an hour of hope into a reality!
We are humbled.

WOW - it worked!!

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