Dear Gillian,

I hope this finds you well. I am writing to tell you about the way I was told I have MS. So here goes.

I discovered in early 2004 that my right foot had started to drag. Eventually, in March of the same year, I decided to go and see a chiropractor - I had used them in the past when I had pulled muscles due to exerting myself too much in the gym.

I duly went and had four appointments, but the leg still dragged. I also found that I was getting tired quickly. Now, the year prior to this I had been to see my doctor as I was getting tired easily. However, the doctor’s reply was that I wasn’t as young as I used to be and was 43 not 33 and I should rest more. At the time I wondered if anyone would have said that to Bruce Forsyth!

I was working for an American company and had private medical insurance, which basically covered everything, so I decided to return to my GP surgery to see if they would agree to me continuing with my appointments with the chiropractor, as I stupidly was paying for them even though they were covered by my health Insurance. I also wanted to see a different doctor as I had lost trust in the first doctor - he had previously misdiagnosed my son, which resulted in me seeking the assistance of another doctor. I booked an appointment with a lady doctor, explained what had happened and that I had visited a chiropractor. She asked questions about exactly what was happening and said she would not be signing me off to see a chiropractor, but that I should go and see a neurologist. I left and duly made an appointment at the Nuffield in Glasgow.

I went along to the appointment the following Wednesday. The neurologist did some tests and asked questions, but he obviously knew from my face that I had no clue why I was there.

He then asked me if I knew why I was there. I said I didn’t and his reply was to test me for the beginnings of Multiple Sclerosis, or a brain tumour. He then requested that I check with my insurance company to see if MRI scans were covered, and if so, to book one at the Nuffield.

I duly checked and was assured it was covered. I then booked an appointment for the following Wednesday. At the appointment they informed me that the results would be ready in a week. I am a fairly independent person and during this time arranged appointments with doctors and consultants on my own. However, I felt that the news may not be good, so asked my husband, Tom, to go with me to the follow up appointment. We arranged an appointment the next Wednesday evening, left my two sons with my mum and headed off for the Nuffield.

We met with the consultant and he asked us both to sit down. He then said you have Multiple Sclerosis and then he said, “Go and live your life as best as you can.” He also asked for additional blood tests and put me on steroids. I now think the steroids were a precaution as the news had been fairly quick, not three weeks prior I had no clue I had anything seriously wrong with my body.

I then left with my husband and took the consultant's advice and have endeavoured to live my life as best as I can. I have Primary Progressive MS so things slowly are getting worse.

I have had this condition now for just short of ten years. I worked until about five years ago, and since then I have been involved in some charity work. I have had to make changes. I cannot walk too far and get tired easily. I think the biggest adjustment is to do with other people - they either still treat me the same, which I am grateful for, or they cannot cope with my slowness and get themselves into a tizzy, which in turn can be tiring for me.

I have found that the drugs used for MS are not effective for me and as a result I resort to meditation. But I have a good family and some good friends who help keep me sane.

Best wishes,

Patricia