



A Story of Hope by Eric Chow

I was diagnosed with RSD/CRPS in my left foot following the completion of my 2nd marathon in the fall of 2010. Or more specifically, after months of numerous misdiagnoses for various conditions from gout, to vascular occlusion, to stress fracture, to vasculitis, to psychosomatic pain and other conditions, I was finally diagnosed with RSD/CRPS because 1 emergency room doctor saw the frustration and pain that I was in and took the time to try and figure out my condition. And when she couldn't get the diagnosis herself, she initiated a snowball effect by making arrangements for consults with specialists that ultimately lead to me getting the correct diagnosis and subsequently, proper treatment.

All plans for the future came to a screeching halt with the RSD/CRPS diagnosis. I was originally accepted into law school with a start date for the fall of 2011; however, I initially had to defer, but ultimately decided to not to attend.

I spent the next few months receiving nerve blocks from an anesthesiologist followed by a year of going through an aggressive but expensive physiotherapy regime just to be able to walk again. After the completion of my nerve block treatment and physiotherapy, the sports physician and the anesthesiologist both told me that my CRPS/RSD was probably a week or two from progressing to type 2 and that it was touch and go during the treatment.

(According to my medical history/notes from the anesthesiologist who treated me, he performed "a lumbar epidural block via caudal route with Xylocaine 0/5% 10cc plus 10cc of saline" with the purpose of acting as a "synthetic block on the left side". This procedure was performed once a week. I also had physiotherapy sessions twice a week along with 2 independent training sessions at home for a year.)

It was at that moment, I wanted to "pay it forward" and become a physician so that I could help one individual get the proper diagnosis. So I applied to premed/med programs even though I had never taken a biology course. Not even a high school biology one.

Even though I am currently able to stand, walk, and run, I still feel the pain from time to time. It becomes noticeable when I sit too long or train too hard.

I am currently finishing up my 2nd year of med school. During this time, I have also completed 2 half-marathons, 4 marathons, 1 full ironman-distance event, and represented the national team at the ITU (International Triathlon Union) Long Distance World Championships.