Personal Statement

Hepatitis C played a part in my life even before it was diagnosed. Back in 1991, there were times when Jane would say she was too tired to do something, or she had pain and was unable to take part in something we had planned. This got worse as the years went by and led to much tension and many arguments. Also our sex lives began to suffer as the tiredness crept in.

Then in 1994 Hepatitis C and liver cirrhosis was diagnosed, this left me with a big guilt complex about all the moaning I had done. There was this huge feeling of desperation and sadness inside me. I realised that my wife, companion and most of all, my greatest friend of 30 years was given a death sentence.
Jane's' illness got worse and my role changed from husband to nursemaid. As Jane became too ill to continue with the chores and gardening, these extra tasks also became my responsibility.

By 1995 our social life did not exist, neither did our sex life. When Jane started Interferon-Alpha treatment, it was a very stressful but hopeful time. Although I had to inject Jane, which was awful and although the treatment made Jane very poorly, there was still a tiny hope that this may stop the process of damage to her liver. However, our hopes were dashed. I had to face the fact again that Jane was terminally ill and I could not do anything about it.

As the years went by, the demand on my time and emotions increased. The stresses and strains became unbearable. I felt so inadequate; I was watching my wife fade away before me. It was difficult to get on with normal every day life; these thoughts were hard to shake.

When it was decided in 1999 that Jane would have a liver transplant, we knew it was the only option. This did not make it an easy choice. The thoughts of such major surgery are terrifying. There was a sense of relief, but also of dread. What if anything went wrong?

The most stressful time by far was during the transplant and the days that followed. I did not know if she would live or die. Jane is my life and the thought of losing her is destroying.

Jane has changed significantly since her illness began, so have I. The changes in her personality since the transplant are the hardest to cope with. She is no longer the happy-go-lucky person she was. She is always on a short fuse and is very aggressive in her attitude. Where did my best friend and lover go?

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I find it hard not to do everything for her; I got so used to her needing me for everything. This irritates Jane greatly but it is hard to get out of the habit. Besides which this had been my life.

Before the transplant, I think I had pinned too many hopes on it. I thought it would be a cure and I could have my old Jane back. Although her health has improved we are still living under the fear of uncertainty. Jane still has active Hepatitis C. Life is still very hard. We still have difficulty doing the things we want, like going out for meals, because Jane has such a restricted diet.

Financially we can no longer afford the things we would like, or do the things we would like to do. We were comfortable in regard to finances when we were both working. This sort of stress adds to the rest.

I feel quite angry that all these things have been taken away from us. I love my wife dearly, enough to give up smoking to benefit her health. Life will never be the same; it no longer fits the dreams and plans we made.