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Hyperemesis gravidarum and cyclic vomiting syndrome: A patient's perspective

Starr Andrews Strong
Chaffy College, USA

The medical community has published numerous articles and reports discussing the causes, symptoms and treatment of hyperemesis gravidarum (HG). These reports are from the medical professional's point of view. In my presentation, I will provide a first-hand patient's perspective of what it is like to suffer from hyperemesis gravidarum and cyclic vomiting syndrome. Even today in the age of the internet and instant communication, hyperemesis gravidarum is still not widely known to the public nor within the medical community itself. Emergency room doctors and even OB-GYN physicians treat pregnant women with HG symptoms without a complete knowledge of the illness. I was told by multiple medical personnel that my symptoms were just "morning sickness", or that they were psychologically induced due to my not wanting a child. It was not until months into my pregnancy that I heard the term hyperemesis gravidarum. Many of the doctors that treated me seemed uncertain as to what the proper treatment should be. One doctor seriously even suggested that I terminate my pregnancy as a way to relieve my symptoms. My presentation will talk about my day to day life once I became pregnant. What it is like being diagnosed with hyperemesis gravidarum, living with a PICC line, daily IV fluids and IV Zofran. I will discuss the need for increased medical research on the causes and treatment of hyperemesis gravidarum. I will talk about the need for more knowledge and understanding of the condition within the medical community. Gain knowledge and understand, not only about the medical aspects of hyperemesis gravidarum, but the psychological aspects on the sufferers. I will talk about the possible lasting effects that hyperemesis gravidarum has on the women and their children. I will discuss my health problems that continue to this day, more than five years after my pregnancy. These conditions include PTSD, cyclic vomiting syndrome which followed my HG pregnancy. I will talk about the dark side of pregnancy that most medical doctors have never seen and are confused on how to treat. I will talk about the lasting aftermath of hyperemesis gravidarum, what it has done to my life and my child's. I hope to open the eyes of medical professionals, so that they see what it is like on the other side of the spectrum, as a patient.

Biography

Starr Andrews Strong has been serving as an Chapter Leader for the Ayden Rae Foundation that gives life saving and supportive services to help mothers and families with HG. She volunteers as an Advocate with Hyperemesis Education and Research Foundation (HELP HER).

starrandrewshgbook@gmail.com

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