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"LET'S STOP TB DURING THIS GENERATION"

Story of Life



Hello, my name is María de la Luz, I have recently turned 52 and I am infected with TB bacteria, in addition I am also diabetic. I got TB from my husband who, after nine years fighting this disease, finally lost the battle on 20 October 2007. I started to feel ill in October 2009. I felt tired, nauseous, dizzy and lost my appetite, then I started a dry cough, not very strong but very disturbing. The worst thing was noticing the noise coming from my throat and recognizing it was the same noise my husband used to make. In early December I decided to go to the doctor, he gave me some containers and told me to send the sputum samples to the lab. The 14th of the same month he came to my house to inform me that the results had come out positive.

He had already brought the medication along and so, this same day I took the first dose. A couple of days after that, the hospital's epidemiologist informed me that they took further tests on my samples and that possibly the bacteria I was infected with was extremely resistant and they needed to know if I was infected before my husband was resistant. Three months passed after that and still no result. After having lost 10 kilos and feeling very weak, I went to the Unit to ask for information. They told me I should continue to wait.

Desperate, both my sister and I started to collect information on the internet and through books, and we found out that every case is registered by the health sector. So we looked for a specialist and he explained that the bacteria could be resistant, furthermore he was able to see that there was already 30% damage in one of my lungs. For this reason I started the treatment right away, on 13 April 2010. To take equal care of my diabetes I also looked for a specialist at UNEMES - Units of Medical Specialization, in order to control the diabetes and take care of my diet. At the same

time I started to feel depressed and a psychologist treated me, helping me understand that I wasn't afraid of myself, but of the disease, and that I shouldn't feel so sad. My results were never stable, there were always ups and downs, but the doctor kept telling me not to despair because if I follow through with the treatment, everything would end up fine. When they gave me the results from the first culture and told me that the bacteria was very resistant and aggressive, they said that the state committee would assemble in order to install a new treatment regimen. On 13 October they told me that the treatment had arrived and that they would give me the first dose. When I got to know the details of the treatment I was going to follow, I got really scared and sad. The first thing I thought was: "My God, I can't do it, I can't handle so many shots." I was already feeling very weak and losing my appetite but after the first month the results came out negative and that gave me hope to keep going, for my children. And here I am, finally with my negative results.

I thank infinitely all those people who even without knowing me, worked and fought against this disease. I thank everyone that was there for me, I felt their support, always with kind and encouraging words. I finally thank with all my heart my doctors and nurses, for their dedication and time. I will always be thankful, for I know my achievements are their achievements. God, thank you for the opportunity of life, now I can hug and kiss my first granddaughter without the risk of infecting her. I am thankful from the bottom of my heart!



Sincerely,
María de la Luz