

Peace of Mind

Chronic Non Specific Pain - An Old Father's Letter to His Young Daughter with Non Specific Chronic Pain

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I am glad to note that all your results are normal and you have no apparent major health problem. Of course I acknowledge that you continue to have pain but please feel relieved that there is no cause for concern or alarm. I am also very happy to note that you have a very healthy lifestyle.



The greatest asset/crown is our body - no matter how unsatisfied we are with it. Our knowledge, intellect, wisdom are jewels in the crown. We inherit these from our parents/ grandparents. You must have inherited it from your grandmothers.

After 47 years in the field of medicine, I strongly feel that there is no perfect body, knowledge, intellect or wisdom. We all have our short comings, both physical and intellectual. I was 18 years when I started having severe, excruciating abdominal pain. It was wrongly diagnosed as amoebiasis initially but subsequently diagnosed as renal/ureteric colic. One Senior Professor even remarked that it is like cancer; keeps recurring. I have had countless attacks of ureteric colic since then, for the past 35 years. Only in the last 10 years, I have not had an attack of ureteric colic, thanks to Amma (mother). I had Lithotripsy and started taking plenty of fluids. Lithotripsy crushed the stone and probably also my pancreas. I ended up with impaired glucose tolerance/prediabetes/diabetes. There is a price we pay for everything in life, except of course, "Father's Love". I have had allergic rhinitis all my life; keep sneezing several times in the morning or at other times, several times in the day. Doctors advised me anti histaminic (allergic) drugs or steroid sniff. By breathing exercises I have it now mostly under control.

You may recollect Paatti's (grandmother's) leg problem. She had it since she was 25 years old but continued all her activities and learned to live a full life with it. She was advised surgery by several doctors; had steroid injection in her leg; the pain continued. She managed to avoid all surgeries and had a full and satisfying life.

Our body is Nature's/God's/Parent's gift to us. It is a machine and there are trillions of cells, innumerable tissues, 206 bones, so many joints, fascia, cartilage, ligaments, etc. Some pain somewhere in the body at some time or several times or daily is certainly not a pleasant thing. Persistent pain is certainly most annoying but if it is not progressive, debilitating or disabling, it should not cause us any disturbance. We must first exclude any of the major causes for the problem. If there is no discernible cause for the problem, we have to learn to cope up with it and carry on with life. Of course we need to periodically recheck to confirm that there is no major problem cropping up.

Modern medicine is neither modern nor often evidence based. Some doctors are good at giving new names/

syndromes without adequate evidence. Musculoskeletal disorders are mostly due to undue stress and strain, improper position, nutritional deficiency or over exertion. We are all not the same. If I were to run because Hussain Bolt runs, I would end up with huge problems. Healthy life style can help relieve many of these problems. I overplayed shuttle cock and landed with Plantar Fasciitis and Calcaneal bursitis forcing me to go on a wheel chair and walker for several days. I have had back ache for the last several decades. Annoying but not disabling. I often get relief by back exercises and massage.

Physiotherapy and massage, hot fomentation, cold compress help to relieve pain in many musculoskeletal disorders. Since we are reasonably sure that there is no major health problem, I think you should focus on physiotherapy. Physiotherapist may be a good choice to consult and also consider Bio-feedback to reassure yourself that there is nothing wrong with you.

In conclusion, all of us are made differently. Even identical twins are not identical. In your own language - "methylation is different even in identical twins". Therefore it is inappropriate to say that we are not like other 26 year olds. Since comparisons are odious and lead us nowhere. We must be happy that we are better off than most of the 26 year olds. Following is a Thamizh poem.

அரிது அரிது மானிடராதல் அரிது
மானிடராயினும் கூன் குருடு செவிடு பேடு நீங்கிப் பிறத்தல் அரிது
கூன் குருடு செவிடு பேடு நீங்கிப் பிறந்த காலையும்
ஞானமும் கல்வியும் நயத்தலரிது
ஞானமும் கல்வியும் நயந்த காலையும்
தானமும் தவமும் தான் செய்தல் அரிது

(Being born as a human is most venerable,
Even reversed is, to be born without being dumb, deaf, humpback or blind
Even if born without disabilities, it is rarer
To have knowledge and education
Even if one has good knowledge and education, it is rarer
To be benevolent and do penance)

- Avvaiyar

We are all fortunate to be what we are. Of course, we all aspire for better health, more money, more name and fame and more of everything. There is nothing wrong about that. However we also have to accept limitations posed by Nature and the circumstances and accept and enjoy our body and our life. Our greatest possession is our body. We must learn to respect and enjoy it with all its limitations.

உள்ளம் பெருங்கோயில் ஊனுடம்பு ஆலயம்
(The heart is a great temple and the fleshy body the shrine)

- Thirumular

Therefore my dear Rasathi - Please get over your sickness and be your normal VIBRANT self. You are the apple of our eyes.

- (Identity withheld)