

Epilepsy – from toddler days to adulthood – my timeline

I am Aditya Mehta, reside in the entertainment & financial capital of India – Mumbai. I'm a marathoner and currently training for a triathlon in January'23. I have a knack for creativity as well – write poems & been involved in theatre as well to a great extent.

In May'1993 I was diagnosed with left frontal Focal Cortical Dysplasia followed by in January'1996 I went into Hepatic coma because of Type A Hepatitis. Early on, my seizures were more petit mal type of seizures where in my eyes & head would turn to the right and flickering of eyes would take place. Since then, over the years the seizures and frequency has changed over the years.

Currently, I am 33 years old, living with Epilepsy has felt the same way as living a normal life with a few hiccups along the way. Never in all these years, did anyone – my family, friends, teachers make me feel different from the rest of the crowd. Since I was diagnosed with Epilepsy, there were several challenges of course, but I overcame them one step at a time and most of all my parents never restricted me from anything except if anything would be harmful to me. Doctors – my neurologists throughout the years have always been very supportive & caring and been a pillar of strength for me at all times.

Epilepsy – for me, has never been a deterrent rather it has and continues to be one of my pillars of strength. I overcame Epilepsy in 3 ways:

A – Acceptance

B - Being Brave

C – Courageous

As a child, I have always been very active despite my Epilepsy. I used to play lawn tennis for my school team (4 years) followed by weight training and yoga as well. Since 7 years I have been running, participated in full & half marathons. My best timing so far has been 3:20 for a full marathon when I ran the New Delhi Marathon in Feb'2018. I have been cycling & swimming as well subsequently in the last few years. Currently, as I am writing this note I am training for my first Olympic distance triathlon which is 1.5kms Swimming – 40kms Bike Ride – 10kms Run. Sport has brought a big transformation in my life – in terms of discipline, focus, consistency, mindset, approach towards life and it continues to provide an energetic boost to start off my day.

In April 2011, during my undergraduate studies in the US, after several incidents of unforeseen grand mal seizures over time and brain mapping tests conducted by the doctors, they concluded that it would be in my best interest to get a Craniotomy done and remove the dysplasia from where the

seizures were triggering and to reduce chances of seizures occurrence up to 70% post-surgery. In the last 11 years, my Epilepsy is well under control and with minimum dosage of medication currently I am able to carry on my routine, be active, sleep well and continue living a healthy life.

I have always believed that we as individuals for whom basic necessities are met easily on daily basis should be very grateful for what we have. Giving back to society or helping others has been something ingrained in me – initially it was on an individual level where on certain occasions I have helped some blind children with their studies, fulfilled wishes of terminally ill children. Since last 4 years, I have been part of Rotary Club of Mumbai Coastline and my sole purpose was to leave a lasting impact in my community as much as possible. I have been the Director of Youth projects followed by Director of Medical Projects and now the Joint Secretary in the current year. In last 2.5 years, I have helped several underprivileged people get treatments, helped stray animals during the pandemic with proper medical treatments (vaccination, deworming, neutering) and food, conducted a mass vaccination drive when vaccines shortage was there amongst several other projects.

Samman Association, is a great medium for People with Epilepsy (PWE) and also to help spread awareness about Epilepsy in our society (schools, communities, parents, teachers) etc. Samman & my Rotary Club have collaborated to conduct Epilepsy awareness programs for schools in Palghar & Waghoshi, Maharashtra. The sessions were interactive, and many people spoke about the problems they or their family members are facing with Epilepsy.

Since July'22 I am on the Managing Committee of Samman Association, my purpose is clear to help People with Epilepsy by guiding them in the right direction and also spread awareness in society and provide inspiration that anything is possible and life is limitless, it's all about changing perspective.

Epilepsy maybe invisible but it is treatable.

Epilepsy maybe difficult from within, but not visible on the outside

Epilepsy isn't the end; it is just the beginning.

Accept Epilepsy & live your life to the fullest.