

Anders Bergquist

My story

A short introduction to my lecture about being a ICU patient and the way back to a normal life

Anders Bergquist

- 39 years old
- Live in Norrköping
- Product Manager at Econova AB
- Married to Marie
- 3 children
 - Erik, Elsa and Love



Introduction

I will talk about my experience of being a patient at the ICU in Norrköping and also how it was to get back to a normal life and reflections of the importance of the support from the ICU staff after being released from the hospital.

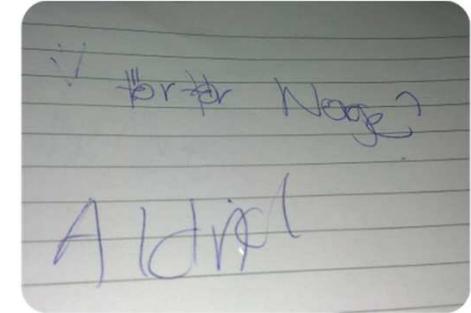


What happened and how I felt about not being able to communicate in a normal way?

I went to the hospital in Norrköping having high fever for some days. They sent me to the emergency ward and then to the infection ward. My condition got quickly worse suffering from a severe lung infection plus a blood infection. I was moved to the ICU on April 18th 2012 and was put in a ventilator the day after.

When I woke up I didn't know where I was or if I was going to survive. I thought I was in Oslo, Norway, and as soon as I could understand that I was still where in Norrköping I asked my wife if I was about to die. When the answer was; "no you are not going to die", it was the first signal to start the fight to get better and to make the choice to try to survive.

It was a struggle to communicate in the beginning not being able to talk, because of the ventilator, and not being able to write because of the medication.



How it felt not remembering what had happened during my first 7-10 days at the ICU, the help of having a diary to help me to put the puzzle together of the events that happened?

As I don't have any memories of my own from April 17th to April 24-26th was it a relief to get the diary with all pictures and a summery of what happened those days. I felt that it was good the both family, friends as well as hospital staff wrote in the diary.

It was extremely emotional to open the diary when I got home and it took me about 2 weeks before I had the strength and courage to do so.

The diary is still an important piece to the puzzle that I'm still putting together and I still find small things in it that I have not read before.



What was the fears that I had and what gave me motivation to get out of the ventilator and then to get my health back. How important it was for me to have my family and friends visiting?

I had, especially, one night when I was struggling and it was just too much pain. I had a negotiation with myself if I should fight to stay alive or just give up. The conclusion that I came up with was that I had a lot to fight for and many things that I still wanted to experience so the conclusion was to fight for my life. It's not a pleasant feeling to be so tired and in pain that you are almost willing to quit give up. I was also feeling agony because of being in a ventilator having the tubes in my mouth and down my throat. It was almost a suffocating and claustrophobic feeling. This got better when the ventilator was moved directly in my thought.



My experience of the staff at the ICU and the difference when I came to a regular ward after my time at the ICU?

When I was moved for the ICU back to the infection ward it was like going from the Hilton to a YMCA. This was the first time that I felt really scared and lonely when I was “left” in my room at the infection ward. I think that there is a huge need for a “transfer ward” between the ICU and a regular ward. All other ICU patients that I have met confirms that they didn’t feel comfortable or healthy enough to go to a regular ward directly for the ICU.

The staff at the ICU in Norrköping was extremely professional and you can really feel that they have an interest in working with their patients. The way of taking care of me, my family and friends feels almost unique compared of the reception that you get when you are in the “daily” medical environment.



To have had the privilege meet with other ICU patients and share our different stories, what it meant to us and a reflection of what it meant to our wives who also participated in this group?

It was a very warm feeling to meet with other patients that has been in a similar situation as myself. I have never met anyone except this group with the same experience.

What stroked me was that the group of ex-patients had the possibility to digest their stay at the ICU while the wives (in this case) was very emotional when they heard the other wives stories. It felt like they re-lived everything again and that they haven't had the possibility to digest what happened to them.

My conclusion of this is that it was very good for us as former patients to meet other patients but it was almost more important for our wives to have the opportunity to meet with others with the same experience to process their experience and emotions.



Contact / more information

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