

Ischaemic Stroke – alteplase

Personal Statement

In 2009, my 18 year old daughter, Sarah, suffered a stroke when she was at school. At that time the FAST adverts were being shown on TV and as a result of this the signs were recognised and she was taken by ambulance to our local A&E in Welwyn Garden City. Sarah was given a CT scan which confirmed her condition and she was given Alteplase intravenously. At that time, our hospital could only offer thrombolysis from 9-5 Monday to Friday, so we were lucky that her stroke occurred on Wednesday morning. Sarah was then transferred to The Royal Free Hospital in London, in case of complications such as brain swelling or bleeding. Sarah has aphasia, which means that she has problems with communication, including reading, writing and speech.

Unfortunately I also had a stroke in November 2011. The reason for my stroke was probably a PFO, a hole in the heart, which was the same condition as Sarah. It was midnight on Sunday, because of my experience with Sarah I recognised the symptoms straight away and my husband called 999. I was taken to The Lister Hospital in Stevenage as stroke services had been centralised there for my area since Sarah's stroke. I was given a CT scan and spoke to a Telemed doctor. Since admission, my condition had improved and I was borderline for thrombolysis. We discussed the options and I was given a high dose of aspirin. I had to wait 15 hours in A&E for a bed on the stroke ward and was anxious to get an MRI scan as soon as possible. My experience was not as positive, which was disappointing as one of the reasons for centralising services was to offer prompt treatment to patients. I have made a good recovery from my stroke, although I have a slight weakness and numbness in my left arm.