

Collins Clarke

Life in Pains. My Story, My Journey.

In September 2013, I started having pains between my right lower abdomen and my right testicle, I took some medications and it stopped. By February 2014 the pains started again. This time it was excruciating and I was asked by a medical doctor to do a laboratory test. This I did and was told I had staphylococcus and was treated. In April 2014, the pains started and I met a urologist who did a Digital Rectal Examination (DRE) on me. He later asked me to do some tests: Prostate Scan, Abdominal Pelvic Ultrasound, etc. The result of the tests came out with every indication of prostate cancer. I was recommended for a PSA test from the scan results. My PSA was 250 and my doctor was really disturbed about the test result, he then recommended a prostate biopsy to determine if it was cancerous.

My zeal and desire at this stage was to get well and most advice I got was to forget about doing a prostate biopsy because it can breed cancer. I then forgot about my doctor's request of doing a prostate biopsy and opted for traditionally prepared medications. These I took for six months as instructed by the producer before doing another PSA Test. At this stage, I did my personal research into prostate cancer, causes, symptoms, alternative cures, etc. I changed my diet completely, stopped taking sugar, reduced drastically my carbohydrate intakes, and started taking more fruits and vegetables. I was fully into the alternative medication treatment and I didn't skip my medications at all. After six months, I went back to do another PSA Test and the result came out shocking. My PSA level has risen drastically from 250 to 370, I was really confused. I immediately contacted the alternative medicine consultant. I told him about the new development and he advised I still stick on to his medications for another three months and go for a PSA Test again. At that moment, I told myself No.

I later met with the Urological Consultant at Federal Medical Centre, Asaba on Tuesday 5th of May 2015. Seeing my condition, he immediately catheterized me and I felt a great relief. It was painful but the relief was far better than the pains. My lower abdomen immediately went flat, the consultant at FMC recommended I do a prostate biopsy and he placed me on Flutamide medication. I had to go to the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH) to meet with the chief consultant for a second opinion on Friday 30th, 2015. The consultant performed a DRE on me immediately and recommended I do a prostate biopsy. A prostate biopsy was done and after about two weeks I came back for the results. The consultant at UBTH told me our fears had been confirmed and that I had prostate cancer. I was really confused

inside me with so many thoughts burning my heart. Is it that I am going to die very soon? Will I make heaven when I die? So many unimaginable things started perusing my mind, the doctor's words were not really making sense to me until I heard, we are going to remove your testicles. I replied, is there no alternative, he said there was. I then asked him what the alternative was. He told me an injection every month or three months depending on how I want it. He further said both would do the same thing, stopping the cancer from spreading.

I left with great disappointment with myself, saying why on heart I allowed this to happen to me. Where did I get it wrong? Why me? Uncountable questions pumped into my heart within ten minutes of my walking to the car park. All my thoughts and imaginations at this time were all negatively inclined, my face was filled with tears. I then heard the voice of my eldest son calling, Dad, I turned and looked around, immediately I gained consciousness of myself and remembered, my son needs me. From that moment until I got to my place of abode, the thought of my sons never left me. I arrived home before dusk and went straight to my bed refusing to speak with anyone. That night was one of the most terrible nights in my life, I couldn't sleep, had nightmares I could not give account of. I woke up the next morning very empty, it was like there was no life in me, I looked at the mirror to see the most horrible image of myself, I became so old, like a cock without feathers. I am dying I told myself, I am dying of prostate cancer I concluded. I could not comprehend anything about me anymore, one thing kept ringing in my heart, what about Collins, what's going to happen to him? My phone rang, I looked at the caller and it was my eldest sister in the U. S. A. I picked the call and the first words I heard from her was "Collins, I got your message and you got to fight. Don't let cancer win, you got to fight it and I know you can win". Her call came with the best message that gave me the greatest motivation to fight my worst woes, telling myself at every second and minute, don't allow cancer to defeat you, you can win Collins. These words kept echoing inside my head as I go along with my daily activities in life. I am on Zoladex Injection and Flutamide Tablets, the last PSA Test I did in July put my PSA at 49. The power behind the words from my sister is all we need to win and I am winning.

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Collins Clarke is a Prostate Cancer Patient and Secretary of Prostate Cancer Awareness and Support Program Initiative (PCESPI) Nigeria. Collins has kindly submitted his heart-warming story for inclusion in our website.