

## Circulation: Cardiovascular Quality and Outcomes

### **PATIENT VIEWPOINT**

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# My Journey With Ischemia and Nonobstructed Coronary Arteries

Lucy Flanagan, BBS

What followed was an 8-year journey to a definitive diagnosis during which I saw 15 doctors, had 22 sets of tests, and tried 18 different medications. This included 3 angiograms, 2 echocardiograms, and 3 stress cardiac magnetic resonance imaging. In 2013, an magnetic resonance imaging did indicate ischemia, so I was given a diagnosis by exclusion of coronary microvascular disease. Over the following years, I was given a myriad of different cardiac medications purely on a trial-and-error basis.

It has been a journey of hopes followed by dashed hopes again and again. I was constantly being told that my condition was not life-threatening. Although this was reassuring, I had got to the stage where I was more interested in living life than not dying because I was not living life but merely existing.

After the conference, I went to see him in Italy and brought a summary of the tests and treatments I had already had with me. He looked at it all, listened to my heart, and, more importantly, he listened to me very intently. He was very interested in how my illness began and the exact details of my symptoms. Over a series of tests he recommended, he started to understand the mechanism of my disease and, more importantly, knew how to treat it.

I am now on (diltiazem) at a high dose (120 mg, 4× a day) is one I was on before at a much lower dose (30 mg., once a day) and did not tolerate then due to low blood pressure but I am now tolerating the high dose with no side effects.

Now I have a quality of life I could previously only have dreamed of. My energy levels have improved significantly and my symptoms (chest pain, breathlessness, fatigue, etc) are greatly reduced.

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### **CLINICAL COMMENTARY**

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# Shortcomings in Managing Patients With Ischemia With Nonobstructed Coronary Arteries

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