

Patient Instructions

Name of Patient: Erin Smart

age 42

Description of the patient & instructions to simulator:

You are looking for reassurance that nothing serious is going on with your brain.

You had a funny episode last Friday. You don't like to take sumatriptan since it makes you feel drowsy. You have been referred to see a neurologist. You expect to see the neurologist within a month or so.

You are on thyroxine for your under-active thyroid gland and you have been having migraines most weeks for the past year. You are taking 2 propranolol twice a day but you are not convinced that they have been helpful so far.

PSO

You are happily married to Mark (an accountant). You have 2 teenage daughters. They are not bad kids. Just teenagers. You don't smoke and hardly drink. You don't use substances.

You work for Gentoo as a housing manager. You spend a fair amount of time in your car.

You are busy. Nice busy. You've just started a top-up degree as well with work. You know you've got lots on. You are really busy, but it's kind of...

"Yeah, I don't feel overwhelmed with life."

"So, part of me thinks 'I could do with a couple of days', but I've got holidays, you know, I can put a week's leave in."

First line and history

I don't know if you know, but came back in last Friday and saw Dr Scott-Batey because I had a really strange episode at work on Friday, where I kind of had a bit of a curtain came across one of my eyes. It wasn't like a migraine – I couldn't write, and that really kind of scared me at work. Someone brought something in for me to sign, and I just couldn't even sign my name or anything. It was – I don't know, I felt really vacant and stuff, and he sent me straight down to A&E. Did a CT scan, which they said was fine but some of the symptoms I was displaying weren't, kind of, normal. And they were talking about sending me to the stroke clinic I think, but they've changed it to the 'hot head clinic' – whatever that is, I don't really know, so I'm waiting for an appointment for that. But, since then the headaches haven't- it's not a migraine but I've just got a constant headache. I still don't feel like – I just feel sluggish. I'm taking paracetamol and ibuprofen daily, I haven't taken the sumatriptan because it doesn't feel like a migraine, as such; it's just this this constant, I don't know, vacant, sluggish type of thing.

No, no family history of migraines, strokes, nothing like that. I mean I was laughing, I know I shouldn't laugh, but it was like a dementia-y kind of thing. Because Dr Scott-Batey was asking me, like, basic questions, he sort of said 'what's that?', 'a watch', and 'what's the things called that go round and round on it?' and I didn't know.

But I still, it was only on Sunday when I got the function of writing back, it's just, it was really scary, I don't know why. It's almost like the things that are in my subconscious, I lost the ability to do.

Ideas – “I really don't know, it almost feels like something's been kind of unplugged. I'm kind of going to bed with a headache, waking up with a headache; it's this side, not the left side, it's the right side.”

(If asked about cluster headaches: “Yeah, I've read about them, obviously when I read on the internet about migraines and various different types and stuff.”)

(If asked if you think you are having cluster headaches or migraine you answer “I don't know. Like I say, it absolutely doesn't feel like a migraine – I've got no nausea, it just feels like, it kind of feels like this eyeball's being pushed out, like a kind of pressure.”)

Concerns – “No, not really, no.”

(Husband's concerns: I don't know, he's just concerned that I'm okay, really.)

The concern was that you couldn't write and thought that something serious was causing part of your brain not to work. You push for an explanation to this later.

Ultimately you will be reassured if the doctor reminds you that the scan was normal and if the doctor suggests that this has a functional explanation (eg migraine).

Expectation – “I really don't know, I think I just probably wanted more reassurance than just to either carry on what you're doing or wait until I've been to this (the appointment with the specialist).”

