PE Patient Case Story

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Some background...

The Wife

Not The Wife!
On a cold snowy evening 14 years ago, we decide to very briskly walk to the pub....

..and I get a pain in centre of chest!!

Practice Nurse!
2 weeks later, an Angiogram done & 3 stents fitted....Angina problem solved..or so I thought...
Fast forward 14 years to September 2015, 3 lawns to cut and “ouch, what’s that pain?”....
October 2015...another Angiogram & this time it’s 2 choices, live or die?

so 3 weeks later, it’s off to Papworth for a Triple Coronary Bypass...a major plumbing job...yuk!

#ThinkThrombosis
Bypass successful, only 4 days in hospital but 12 hours after discharge, problems while having dinner!

- Unable to lift right arm
- Sharp stabbing pain in ribcage
- Difficult to talk & breathe
- Anxious

Wife (Nurse) says “No time to waste, I’ll drive you to nearest A&E

West Suffolk Hospital
It’s now 1am in the morning, two junior Dr’s and 1 consultant on duty....

- Bypass history explained
- Vital signs taken, BP ok, Pulse 120
- Blood analysis done, D-Dimer raised
- Chest X-Ray done, nothing found
- PE suspected, CT Scan done at 2am
- Consultant liases with Papworth Consultants over scan, small horseshoe shaped clot eventually detected visually
Admitted into Coronary Care Unit for 2 days due to Atrial Fibrillation (160bpm)

• Immediate Heparin injection & put on Warfarin initially, but problems getting blood samples, so switched to Rivaroxaban

• AF stabilised so moved to Chest ward, very depressing, surrounded by dying lung cancer patients!

• Discharged 5 days later with a wad of “do’s & dont’s” leaflets (but can I ride my bike, fly a plane, cut the grass?)
Summary

• 10 days later, severe stabbing pain in right ribcage again, back to A&E......Diagnosis, a “pulled muscle”!!
• Forum anxieties, who to talk to about VTE?
• Conflicting Diagnosis (PE or strained rib muscle)
• Thanks to the Papworth on-call, on-line cardiac support team
• Blood “Thinners”, which one, what side effects?
• PE?...I think I’ve had it easy, many others haven’t
• So I’m now a Lay Member of the NICE Guidelines Committee on Hospital Acquired VTE, representing patient & carer’s experiences & views
• ..and a Member of the Papworth Patient Experiences Panel