

# Bedside Thoughts



**I write this from my wife's bedside in an acute respiratory rehabilitation unit in a South Florida hospital. We are beginning our 7<sup>th</sup> week of hospitalization. You may ask yourself, "What does the journey of this couple have to do with MS?" The answer is: everything.**

The purpose of this blog is more than a source of therapy for a spouse caregiver and greater than the need to rant about the inequities of life. The sole purpose of this article is to shine a very bright light on the difference between MS-related fatigue that may accompany an exacerbation and the ever so subtle presence of coronary disease and how it may present itself in women.

Our innocent and naive journey began after a visit from our children and grandchildren. At some point during their visit my wife ran a low grade fever. We attributed the fever to a bug she caught from a grandchild. The fatigue persisted for several days so we called her neurologist. The answer we received was that she may be having an exacerbation and to give her a few weeks to regain her strength.

After a few weeks, and what we thought to be anxiety related to the lingering exacerbation, we visited our primary care physician in Florida. While my wife described the markers that would suggest a cardiac-related incident, she was dismissed, despite asking for blood work to be done to test for a kidney infection. Three weeks after the visit to her doctor my wife ended up in the ER. She needed stents installed in three arteries.

There is no need to go into the gut wrenching, emotionally charged, roller coaster that we have ridden for the past 42 days. What I desperately want to come of this nightmare is for

you to push your primary care physicians and neurologists to investigate whether symptoms you're experiencing may be related to something other than MS. Regardless of the cost, time and energy needed to conduct such an investigation, failing to do so can result in life-changing - if not fatal - consequences.