London Marathon Journey: a running commentary - October

The fluorescent bats swinging in an air conditioned breeze in the local supermarket glare at me as I pack my bags. Halloween is normally the scariest thing about October but this year that’s not the case. Transplant recipients, I think, are quite a resilient group, but I don’t mind confessing that I’ve found recent weeks challenging. Dark mornings, incessant rain and spending more time inside are difficult. Those little frustrations which wouldn’t bother me if the sun was shining, are starting to cause feelings of disquiet.

At work, I continue an odd existence of wearing full PPE to treat patients and then retreating to an area which has been created by my lovely boss, to write up my notes. Sadly, visiting restrictions mean patients can feel isolated from their families. My colleagues and I try to provide a little social interaction along with our clinical interventions.

The running continues and being outside (whatever the weather) is where I feel safe. Actually, I’m starting to realise that I’ve probably always felt this way to some extent. People lucky enough to have never spent weeks in hospital won’t appreciate the sheer relief of feeling the breeze on your face when you first venture outside. As a child, sitting in a park close to the Brompton Hospital after surgery was a welcome escape from the cold corridors, flickering lights and worried voices.

My latest purchase is one of those inflatable gym balls which I’m using to try and improve my balance and core strength. I now have a little routine of exercises which the magazine “Runners World” tells me will transform me into a sprinting goddess (some artistic licence there). I can report that holding a “plank” position for a minute hurts me nearly as much as having chest drains removed. Say no more!