

Feedback on Bladder Neck Reconstruction - Printable version

Having been incontinent from birth, wearing padded pants was all I ever knew. When I was small it was just the way it was but as I moved through teenage years it became more of an issue. I became more self-conscious and aware of the problem. It didn't stop me doing things, but it did affect how I felt when I was around other people. Innocent jokes from other people about incontinence hit a nerve.

After being referred to Mr Ramnath Subramanian at St James' Hospital, Leeds in my late teens I was told that I had two options:

- § I could stay the way I was for life; or
- § I could have a mitrofanoff bladder reconstruction surgery and a possible bladder augmentation.

I was devastated at this news! The mitrofanoff sounded pretty gruesome and at the age of 17, two weeks in hospital and three months recuperation sounded like too much of a waste of precious time (with a scar included in the bargain!).

After reflection and research, I decided to go ahead with the procedure. Looking at it pragmatically I realised that going to the toilet normally is pretty disgusting but because we do it as a matter of course we think nothing of it and I knew that over time catheterising would also become the norm. Mr Subramanian arranged to have the procedure carried out in the summer of 2009 to facilitate my A-Level studies.

The initial weeks and months after the operation were tough but I got brilliant support from Mr Subramanian, the nurses on Ward 15 and Craig, the specialist urology nurse.

Now 5 months post-op, I'm delighted with the result! I am completely dry and can go to the toilet normally, meaning that in the future I will only have to catheterise once or twice a day!

The difference it has made to my life is unbelievable. I can barely remember what it was like to be incontinent. One of the major differences since the operation is that I am more open and willing to mention the fact that I had a medical condition because for me it is now resolved.

Yes, I do have a small hole in my tummy but the majority of the time I forget it's there. Probably my biggest fear before I got the procedure done was the catheterising through the mitrofanoff, I thought it would be really dirty and disgusting but I've since realised that it isn't. It is actually more hygienic than going to the toilet normally and does not take much longer.

I have only one regret - that I didn't have the opportunity to get the procedure done years ago!

SG

