

The Battle of The Neurontin

"All I'm asking is if you could give me something to take the pain away?" I asked the doctor for help. He looked at me with a skeptical gaze that I'm pretty sure hundreds of his patients have seen. I don't know what category he is going to put me in at this point. He could classify me as someone who needs the medication or as someone trying to beat the system. In all honesty I am one of the few that need it. I get a burning sensation in the palms of my hands that makes it hard for me to write. Writing is a task I do daily as a hobby and is very important in my eyes. I correlate writing with keeping me sane. Now the crazy thing is... this medication, Neurontin or also known as Gabapentin, is not a scheduled narcotic in any way. In fact on the streets it's not that hard to obtain a prescription for this non-narcotic drug. You can take this medicine for a great many reasons and most doctors see these pills as a nonaddictive remedy for a range of ailments that it is prescribed for. Knowing this and having a prescription on the streets for years just makes the whole process I am going through to get them very frustrating. Why is it so hard to obtain a non-narcotic in prison? I don't honestly know why. Finally the doctor looks at me and says "Let me look at your records and follow up in a couple weeks." A couple weeks for my follow up means a couple more weeks of debilitating pain. But for fear of getting drug out of his office by medical security, I get up and see myself to the door. This starts the story of my struggle to get Neurontin, the many ways it helps me and why I was wrongfully discontinued from receiving

it.

Gabapentin is a non-narcotic nerve inhibiting medication. This means in general it's intended use is focused for nerve pain. It's similar to Lyrica if you know what that is. Being a nerve pain inhibitor it is used to treat a condition known as neuropathy. Neuropathy is when you feel a burning or tingling pain in the extremities. In other words it can be described as being similar to your hands or feet falling asleep but at the same time having pain associated with it. This is more common in people that have diabetes but that is not the only reason for this medication. It helps in general with nerve pain but has also been used in combination with seizure medications, mood stabilization and pain that is not considered nerve pain like a broken bone or a thrown out back. Though these are just a few of the common reasons it is prescribed, there are many more reasons as well. Not to say that this is a "miracle pill" that cures everything, but it is extremely versatile in it's many uses, and is considered to not be very habit forming.

With this information I do not see the need to be put on an NSAID. (Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug). These are basically Ibuprofen, Naproxen, and Motricam or other similar N.S.A.I.D. pills. The type of pain I experience is not helped by these other medications. The Department of Corrections medical staff seems to think or believe an NSAID,

which is used to treat joint pain, can treat nerve pain as well. I am not a practicing medical professional but I don't believe this logic makes any sense. I do understand though that there is a process to get Gabapentin that must go in a certain chain of procedures. So I take a pill that is not helping me to appease the doctor.

Another common practice that the medical staff likes to do is give out serotonin blocker pills. These have been known to help with pain but pain is not the primary intended use. Serotonin blockers block the serotonin receptors in the brain so that more of this natural chemical is bouncing around. These pills are typically used as a mood stabilizing drug. They treat a series of mood disorders like anxiety and depression. Though these pills may be beneficial to some, I already take a common serotonin blocker for psychiatric reasons. I definitely notice an improvement in my mood when taking these medications, but I still struggle with the neuropathic pain regardless. Since I already take one of these medications and am stable on it, it makes no sense to change or add another one. Increasing the dose of my current medicine is also not possible because I am already on a high dose. That being said, the common alternative is not going to work for me.

At this point you might be asking yourself, "What's the big deal about this Gabapentin?" I find myself asking

the medical staff the same thing. See I am willing to take anything that is going to work. Through a long process of trial and error I have narrowed it down to what works and what doesn't. Trying to explain to medical staff that I know this is what works is like pulling teeth. For some reason the D. O. C. doctors think that everyone is abusing the medical system.

Neurontin helps me in many ways. I suffer from mood disorders, seizures, neuropathy pain, and pain in my jaw along the nerve line where I had a previous fracture. This medicine works wonders for me. With all these factors I find it hard to understand why it takes months upon months to get this medication. This one pill is extremely beneficial to me and I feel that with everything considered I should have no problem getting it.

"People use this medicine to get high" the doctor tells me. Okay I was not aware of this but see no point in arguing with the man. He then proceeds to tell me that it is a big problem on the prison yard. That is understandable but when he finally puts the right emails into action to get me this pill, he makes it crushed and floated on water. Doing this makes it impossible to abuse. I literally drink this medicine in front of a nurse and then pass a mouth inspection.

The doctor finally gave me the medicine that works! I got a respectable dose and everything seems to be getting better for me.

I can write all day pain free. I have a healthy appetite and I function better. My mood is stable and overall everything is as good as it can be while in the prison system. But with as much good as I was experiencing this is the beginning of the end to my story.

It all started when I found myself on L.O.P. (Loss of Privileges) status. I try to keep constant contact with my mom. On L.O.P. you cannot use the phones. So in order to let my mom know things are fine I ask a friend of mine to have his people send out a message for me. He is on the rec yard and I am heading to medical. My friend hands me the note that I wanted texted to my mom, he then tells me it was sent. I put the note in my pocket and just then a Correctional Officer wants to pat me down. He asks me what I put in my pocket and I tell him its a note to my mom. The CO starts to talk to me crazy and tells me that I am stupid. Now I won't stand for this type of harrassment, but things go from bad to worse really fast. He pulls a pill out of my pocket that is prescribed to me for sleep. I consider this pure dumb luck on his part. At this point in time he takes me to the hole.

Here is where I find myself completely baffled. Because the CO found a sleeping pill that I am prescribed in my possession medical is advised to take me off the Gabba-pentin. The Gabba-pentin was impossible for me to "cheek" and I was not found with any on me. I still get to take the sleeping pill. Basically my punishment for possessing a sleeping pill is to be put through untreated chronic pain. Not

only is this unjust but I'm pretty sure it's illegal. I am doing all that I can and now "The Battle of The Neuvontin" begins.