

PE1463/CCC

Chloe Hardie Email of 25 January 2015

I am writing today to provide evidence towards the current petition regarding better thyroid diagnosis and treatment.

I would like to add self treatment was my last resort. After failing to be taken seriously by 12 GPs and 2 Endocrinologists all together I had no choice but to try and treat myself out of my own pocket. Which is extremely difficult as a single working mother on minimum wage.

My Evidence:

At around 18 years of age I had everything in front of me. I had just moved into my first flat with my boyfriend, had a great job with an amazing social life and life was pretty grand. I suddenly started to gain weight incredibly quickly, to the point I was getting stretch marks and I figured it was perhaps one night out too many. I worked 45 hours a week in an active job role, plus the gym on top in the evenings. There was no way a few glasses of wine was to blame.

Then the panic attacks started and the weight dropped off again. I was sweating buckets 5 minutes after leaving my flat, I couldn't control it. After months of suffering I couldn't hack it anymore. I was sick to death of having to change my uniform twice a day and having to hide in the toilet to breath out the panic attacks. I became completely agoraphobic and ended up quitting my job. I never left the flat for weeks at a time. Occasionally once a fortnight I'd brave taking the bins out. It took me a good hour to talk myself into going to the shop for a pint of milk. Completely ridiculous. My boyfriend ended up dragging me to the Doctors. I was given anxiety tablets and a psychologist. Nothing helped. The tablets didn't touch the sides and there was nothing to talk to the psychologist about. I slowly sunk into a deep depressive state, where I'd draft suicide notes on a daily basis. I was planning my goodbyes to my family and friends. I was a teenager.

The thought of signing on feared me with more anxiety then getting another job. So I went back to work and started the same struggles all over again. It got into daily routine. Taking 3/4 pairs of clothes with me for the sweating. Carrying a sick bowl in my handbag when the panic attacks made me sick, flu medications and an inhaler as I was constantly ridden with flu and chest infections. It sounds dramatic, but some days I felt like I was slowly dying.

It is incredibly difficult to sit in front of a doctor and be told I was the problem. I was overeating or I wasn't getting enough exercise. It was my parents' divorce or the long hours at work. My lack of periods was because I was too fat. Or my hair falling

out was because of my apparently 'poor diet'. It made me so angry. Not one of them thought about any blood test. And completely judged me on my appearance. I fell pregnant the next year. The pregnancy was completely horrendous. I was barely out of midwife appointments with sore joints and muscles. They again blamed my size on overeating. Even though my gestational diabetes test was negative, they refused to look further. Eventually I was induced due to early signs of pre-eclampsia. I had to deliver by forceps, he got stuck. They feared they broke his arm to get him out. He wasn't breathing and I was borderline transfusion. I got away with a 3rd degree tear. He thankfully was successfully resuscitated and his arm was okay. He was 10lbs 14oz. The nurses told my newborn "Thank god you're out of there and your mummy isn't feeding you anymore! "

As soon as I heard that, I knew I had to find out what was wrong with me. For the next 12 months I had no menstrual cycle. Then, a heavy bleed. The doctor again suggested I was too fat to ovulate. But would do a thyroid check 'just in case'. There it was a few weeks later. My results showed a TSH level of 24. 'Normal' being 0.5.

I was given Levothyroxine and sent on my way. I was blessed to finally know what was wrong with me. But things got so much worse.

The weight continued to pile on. I was once a size 12, a comfortable 13st. I was now a size 24, and approaching 22st. I developed acne, bald patches, bad teeth and gums, chest pains, heart palpitations, excess facial hair, bone pain, muscle pain. I couldn't even hold my own baby for more than 5 minutes. Each time I went back to the doctor I was told my bloods were normal and sent on my way again.

I had terrible memory loss, brain fog and complete lack of concentration.

I could not function. Eventually I found Lorraine Cleaver and my eyes were suddenly opened to thousands of people who felt exactly like me. Levothyroxine was NOT working. It does NOT work.

I was sick to death of being sick to death. Sick of not being listened to, sick of being told to lose weight. Sick of being fobbed off with the 'You may have PCOS.' I had one last option and that was to self treat myself.

I'll let you see the photos for yourself. But I have lost 8st, I have been promoted, my little boy finally has his mummy back and I am a whole new person. No doctor has helped me, I have had to pay for this myself, do countless hours of research and I have not changed a thing. I haven't changed my diet because I never had to in the first place, I have not increased my exercise because I was already doing enough. If this isn't evidence enough then I'm not so sure what else we all have to do here to prove what we are all trying to say.

Yours faithfully,

Chloe Hardie