

Zurich, University Hospital, Friday, 3. Dec. 2021

Carried and guided ...

Dear family and friends,

Since Monday (Nov 29th) I am now again in the University Hospital in Zurich, and quite a bit has happened during this time. On Tuesday (Nov 30th) I received the high-dose chemotherapy, and Thursday (Dec 2nd) I was given my own stem cells again by infusion. With that, the treatment is basically finished, now it's a matter of waiting and getting through the next few days.

Even if it sounds like a repetition, some things went quite differently this time. There are rather unpleasant surprises, but then there are also things that I can only marvel at.

From Modern & Sterile to Old & Charming

On Monday morning, the registration desk did not send us to the same modern isolation ward, but to the "normal ward" in the old building across the street. When we arrived at this ward, one of the nurses asked me if I was Mr. Kuhs, and then opened up to me as follows: Unfortunately, the single room they had intended for me was occupied because they had to isolate one person. I would now be placed in a two-bed room, but when the critical days came, I would be transferred to a single room in any case. Needless to say, that was quite a damper. This was intensified when we realized how cramped it was in this two-bed room. It was dark and for me there was no view out of the window, but only onto the dividing curtain.

Initial information was given, the nurse took my vitals, drew blood samples for the lab, and performed a nasal swab for the Covid-19 test. I put some of my personal belongings in the nightstand in between. The ward physician introduced himself, gave me information and

answered my questions. Otherwise, it was a case of waiting and waiting.

Covid helps to get a single

Then suddenly a call came from our son Felix. Since his two daughters had been running a fever for a few days, he had done a rapid test in the morning before work, which was positive. Therefore, he had to do another PCR test and then wait for the result at home in isolation. He called us now because we had been in contact a few days before and both of his children had been running a fever since the day after.

I immediately informed the nursing staff, who then consulted with the doctors. The neighbor in the room, who of course heard all this, immediately asked full of concern what this meant for him. He had been there for a week and was close to aplasia, the critical days. Therefore, his concern was understandable.



The doctors decided to isolate me immediately. And so half an hour later I was in a vacated single room with my bed and bedside table. You can imagine that I was not at all unhappy about this. This building actually has 8 decades under its belt and is a heritage building. The room is nowhere near as spacious as in the modern ward, but it actually has a lot more charm, and I have large windows that I can open and let fresh air in every now and then. The sun shines in wonderfully every now and then, or I can see the sleet pelting down, and I occasionally have a beautiful view of Lake Zurich and the mountains behind it, when they're not covered by clouds.

Sometime later Felix sent me a message: he had done another self-test at home, and it was negative. The official confirmation by the PCR test would be there the next day at the earliest.

Later that afternoon, nursing came and told me that my Covid-19 test was negative, and that they had then

registered me with anesthesia for the insertion of the central venous catheter (CVC); now the program – the high-dose chemo – could start as planned the next day.

To not extend the punch line too long – Felix's PCR test proved negative the next day – false alarm. But it did help me get a single room, for which I am very grateful. So I can talk on the phone, pray, sing and get visits from my wife without disturbing anyone, have my own wet room and the sink and closet in the room to myself.

Placing the CVC - this time very unpleasant!

In the late afternoon, they pushed me in bed down narrow elevators and corridors to the "shock room" for anesthesia. That does sound threatening, but I assume that the professionals are at work here. I remembered this as something unpleasant from the first time in August, but quickly over and professionally done. The CVC is inserted under the right collarbone into the vein that comes from the arm and goes directly into the heart. A wire mesh is inserted there, which is widened afterwards, if it is in the right position, so that the catheter with its three thin tube connectors can be inserted. The tube is then sutured to the skin. The wound is protected with a band-aid, and a clip taped to the skin provides strain relief.

This time, however, a rather young-looking anesthesiologist was to perform the procedure, assisted by an older and more circumspect surgical nurse. After giving the first local anesthetic injection, she got started. She pushed and drove and pushed again. At one point I asked if there was any problem and she said she couldn't get under the clavicle properly and would now re-inject again to numb it. This went on for quite a while and hurt quite a bit in between. I was brave, she said. Well, what could I do but put on a good face and control myself? Finally, she asked the assistant to call the colleague next door. He then came and explained to her how she had to do it, and stuck to it. Finally it worked. And she pushed the wire mesh forward. That's kind of uncomfortable, and especially I got nervous when I realized my heart was stumbling. I immediately said something, and the doctor was like, yeah, that's fine, they saw it on the monitor right away too, and that's when they knew they were in the right place, and they just pull it back a little bit. As a rule, most patients wouldn't notice that because they had the procedure

just before the surgery under general anesthesia. Great, I thought, then why don't you let the young doctor practice on them, and let the experienced doctors do it on those who are only locally anesthetized!

Anyway, I had quite a feeling of pressure on the right breast after they still x-rayed me and thus controlled the position of the catheter, and I was brought back up in bed.

Later that evening, I was sitting by the bed for a while, talking on the phone or reading messages on my smartphone, when I suddenly felt a wetness on my right arm. My hospital gown was totally soaked with blood on the right side - the wound had suddenly started bleeding profusely. I immediately rang the bell, and the nurses got a little nervous, removed the band-aids, and squeezed the wound tight. In this way they stopped the bleeding and then called the doctor. The doctor took a look at the situation and decided that the next morning another X-ray should be taken to check the situation. The wound was to be observed overnight. I wondered if it had bled inward and if I would get a nice hematoma.

Thanks be to the Lord, it stayed that way. In the meantime, the wound has healed well, the hematoma has disappeared, and above all: the access works perfectly. The situation was good, and so the next morning I received the high dose as planned. In addition, cortisone and anti-nausea medication, which I receive regularly.

Stem cells received on Thursday

Thursday morning I also received my stem cells, 3 bags with a total of over 5 million cells, which were given by infusion within half an hour. Everything went without complications and I still felt pretty good so far.

This is how it continues

I started this 2nd round with generally better blood values than in August with the 1st round. The last 3 months without chemo gave me a good recovery and improvement of all values. The reason for this is the impeccable functioning of the stem cells I received in the 1st round. At least, this was shown by the findings of the bone marrow sample that the oncologist in Winterthur still took the week before, on Thursday, November 25.

I can only join in the wonder and praise to God that King David wrote down thousands of years ago in Psalm 139, verses 13 to 17, which I read Friday morning as part of my daily Bible reading plan:

¹³ For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

¹⁷ How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them!

God is the Lord over every cell of my body! Therefore, I trust that He will bring me through the next difficult days as well.

What I have told you here about my experiences, I have entitled with "Carried and led ...". This comes from a wonderful song, the text of which I am printing for you in the appendix.

For today, greetings to all; thank you for all the feedback, encouraging messages and especially for your prayers!

Warm greetings
Andreas

PS 1: Song (translated from German)

- 1) Together, God has given us this time.
Look back and see what he has done for us!
Many times he has directed the difficulty to the good, the great God, we worship him!

Refrain: Carried and guided, sheltered and protected, full of faithfulness, full of love and patience.

As a father who does not leave his child even in eternity, he takes us by the hand, wants to be with us also in the future.

- 2) We have seen that God makes grow, every day through joy and through sadness.
As a beautiful tree that now stands rock solid, you have matured through God's goodness.

Text and Music: [Juliane Elter](#)

PS 2: Custom Clothing

My ingenious wife has altered T-shirts for me so that I can use them instead of the not very practical wing shirts. To do this, she cut open the right sleeve and inserted a band with snaps through which the lines of the CVC can be led to the outside. I gladly pass on the admiration of the nursing staff to her in each case!

