



PROFILE

# David Comer

## LIVING WITH CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM (CNS) B-CELL LYMPHOMA

*“I was extremely lucky to survive”*

Prior to my illness I had been suffering from a headache in the left side of my forehead for about 3 weeks. This resulted in me suffering a seizure on April 4th 2018 at about 8pm in the evening. As a result of this I was taken to University Hospital Galway and subsequently moved to Beaumont hospital to begin the journey. A tumour was discovered in my brain and this was also discovered to be cancerous.

I was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer. CNS B-Cell Lymphoma was my diagnosis. It is a disease which affects the central nervous system. According to research carried out this form of cancer accounts for less than 1% of diagnosed forms of Lymphoma. The treatment for same is a very intensive cycle of chemotherapy to initially deal with the tumour, followed by a stem cell transplant at St James's Hospital. The Chemotherapy process was in blocks of 6 days as an inpatient at University Hospital Limerick on 4 separate weeks with 2 weeks in between. During the 6 day cycle 7 doses of chemotherapy drugs would be administered. When this treatment was completed I was referred to St James's hospital where I proceeded to undergo the transplant. This was a difficult process as I suffered from numerous infections and sickness. On the 11th November 2018 I was released after a successful transplant and have not looked back since.

Back in 2018 I was a 42 year male

employed as a Detective Garda in An Garda Siochana at Tuam Garda Station. I would have been of relatively good health and would have had healthy eating habits and exercised regularly by cycling approximately 200 kilometres on a weekly basis with friends. I had moved into my own house approximately 2 years prior to this. I lived quite a normal life and enjoyed socialising on a regular basis with friends and work colleagues. I would have been a keen golfer and held a full driving licence and drove on a daily basis. I would have been fairly independent in my lifestyle and had not been involved in a relationship with another person for just over three years. I enjoyed life but would have been hard on myself and negative towards life itself.

Since recovering from my illness, I have been diagnosed with Epilepsy and although this is far from suffering with cancer, it does inhibit my former lifestyle. I am unable to drive and have had to move home to

my parents' house, where I currently still reside. This occurred as a result of three surgeries I underwent to my brain prior to treatment beginning as a tumour had to be partially removed prior to my diagnosis

I am part of a close family with both of my parents still working and 2 sisters living close by. They have 7 children between them so I would have enjoyed spending time in their company when not working. All in all I was living a very comfortable life prior to getting unwell due to the illness I suffered from during 2018.

I now live a much different life. I have started to plan holidays, something I could not do for almost 18 months and had not done for the previous 3 years.

The disease I was diagnosed with, Central Nervous System B-Cell Lymphoma, which I was extremely lucky to survive, has probably opened my eyes up to life and realise how brittle life can be. I hope that due to the wonderful work carried out by the various medical professionals and nursing staff at University Hospital Galway, Beaumont Hospital, University Hospital Limerick and Saint James's Hospital in Dublin. Also I have received great support from both the Irish Cancer Society and Cancer Care West in Galway, both of whom provide phenomenal service to people in my precarious position. I also hope that I take better care of my life in the future.

#### RARE DISEASE

##### **About B-Cell Lymphoma**

A type of cancer that forms in B cells (a type of immune system cell). B-cell lymphomas may be either slow-growing or aggressive/fast-growing. Most B-cell lymphomas are non-Hodgkin lymphomas. There are many different types of B-cell non-Hodgkin lymphomas. Prognosis and treatment depend on type and stage of the cancer.