

A Change of Life Event

I am a 5'1", 110-115 pound female.

When I was in my early 50's [1990's], I was having more and more headaches. This was considered a "change of life" event. I developed hypertension. This runs in the male side of my family.

Soon my rings had to be cut off, as my hands got progressively larger. I was sent to a rheumatologist and was medicated for about one year, without any change. Meanwhile, my shoe size kept going up. I had a bunion removed in 2000. I still continued to have headaches and started growing facial hair, developed a large mouth and nose, and excessively oily skin.

I was a very heavy snorer, and soon started falling asleep during the day or night for no apparent reason.

After a family member hadn't seen me for a few years, she was shocked to see how much my facial features had changed. She described my features to her GP. He checked via the internet with the Mayo Clinic 2007, entering "big hands, big feet". The results were acromegaly and a list of characteristics. I could relate to many of them.

I took the list to my GP and their remark was "I wondered". I was sent to the endocrinology clinic in May 2007. I had blood work, an MRI, and a barrage of tests. My growth hormone was around 900.

I had a tumour removed from my pituitary gland in June 2007 and felt immediate changes with my soft tissue, skin tags, and the snoring almost stopped. I was able to stay awake all day. My hands and feet have stabilized.

I take 30mg of octreotide (Sandostatin® LAR®) every 28 days. My growth hormone was under 200, last check.

I expect this to be a life long trip. But it is very nice to at least know what caused these very strange things to be happening to my body.

Clinical Pearls

- The goal of treatment is to normalize your pituitary function, thereby reducing production of growth hormone and IGF-1, reducing symptoms and preventing long term complications.
- Reduction of symptoms will help patients look better and feel better. The primary goal for most people is to live a long and healthy life, free of symptoms.
- Treatment can be effective at any stage, but the sooner the better.