

(Subhead)

Going through kidney transplant and chemo therapy, Chinese woman continues to fulfill her traveling dream.

Reporter Chunxiang Jin/New York news

From 33-year-old Chinese woman Alison Lee's hearty laughter, it is hard to notice that she has been suffering from devastating illness. Ever since she had been diagnosed of systemic erythematosus lupus (lupus) at 16, she went through dialysis, being diagnosed of lymphoma, chemo therapy, and kidney transplant. It is very hard for ordinary people to imagine the extent of her pain and suffering. The only thing that hasn't changed throughout the process is her optimism and the positive attitude towards life. Even if there are more uncertainties of the disease, it does not hinder her dream to continue to travel around the world. "Traveling is my motivation to live, even if I ended up in the emergency room in foreign countries."

After graduating from New York University, Alison Li worked as a makeup marketing manager. At the Lupus Health and Wellness Day, she pointed out that at 16 she was diagnosed of blood disorder and erythema. When she was 19, her salivary gland enlarged. Nobody could confirm whether she has Sjogrens syndrome, or lupus. However, the treatment is the same for both of these diseases. So, she was fighting against the disease without knowing the cause of it.

Starting from 24, she was in and out of the hospital due to Sjogrens syndrome. At 31, she was in tremendous amount of stress working in the beauty industry. She often found herself working through a whole day without urinating and eventually she was diagnosed of kidney failure. She was in peritoneal dialysis for 9 months and resigned from her beloved position. Last year in June, she received a kidney from her mother and went through a kidney transplant surgery successfully. However, a month after the transplant, she was diagnosed of acute lymphoma. She lost all her hair during her chemo treatment. Finally, after a whole year of treatment she conquered the sickness. She stated that now she has a healthy kidney. The cancer is in remission. She has rekindled her interest in traveling and she just finished her tour to Australia for three weeks last month.

Alison said that for more than a decade of being sick, she was facing a lot of uncertainties. For instance, could the same treatment be applied to various causes? Or would the lupus attack the new kidney after transplant? Through the array of treatments, Alison has learned how to set her priorities, and said, "You need to trust your doctor and make your own decision."

To Alison, the most frustrating part during her course of sickness was not being able to travel. She said, "Today I might feel perfectly well, but tomorrow I could be in debilitating pain." For the past decade, she had cancelled her plane tickets to Hawaii, Spain, Brazil, and England due to the flares of her sickness. In addition, even though she made it to China, Florida, and Seattle successfully, she always ended up in their local emergency rooms.

However, all these years of suffering did not knock down Alison. Whenever her health condition allows, she travels. She takes all her medical records, medications, and an oximeter with her. She stated, "I always travel with friends. The first thing that I do when I arrive is to find out where the local hospital is just in case the unexpected happens." She said that she never feels that she is the unlucky one. There are a lot of things in life that one needs to feel gracious about, for example, the accompaniment of relatives and the support of all the friends. She never allowed lupus to hinder her love of life. Soon she will have to return to her work and continue to live her vibrant life.