Dan Reynolds Shares His Experience with Ankylosing Spondylitis (AS) to Raise Awareness

Education & Awareness

Imagine waking up one day with pain so intense and debilitating that even the smallest movements seem impossible. Now, picture that pain happening every day to the point where you are unable to do the things you love most. That was the reality for Dan Reynolds, lead singer of the Grammy award-winning rock band Imagine Dragons.

Dan’s ankylosing spondylitis (AS) symptoms started when he was in his early twenties. He was a newlywed and on an evening run with his wife when he felt a sudden onset of pain in his lower back that he described as a “drilling sensation.” Over time, the pain got worse and at its peak, Dan would wake up in the middle of the night crying from excruciating pain. At the same time, Imagine Dragons was starting to gain popularity. The pain began to affect every aspect of his life, from holding his child to performing on stage, and Dan feared that these physical limitations would end his music career before it began.

Dan comes from a large family with a history of autoimmune diseases, including AS; however, a diagnosis was difficult. AS primarily affects the spine but can also cause pain and stiffness in other areas of the body such as shoulders, hips, and heels. In the early stages of the disease, there may not be visible indicators, which is why it is often referred to as an “invisible disease.” Finally, Dan was encouraged by his brothers to see a rheumatologist, and soon after, he was diagnosed with AS.

AS is a chronic form of arthritis primarily affecting the spine, causing inflammation of the spinal joints, which can lead to severe pain and discomfort. In most advanced cases, inflammation can lead to new bone formation on the spine, causing the spine to fuse in a fixed, immobile position.

After diagnosis, Dan’s symptoms began to improve with treatment and a new physical fitness routine. Dan practices yoga every day to help reduce his pain and keep his joints flexible and today, Dan enjoys life to the fullest; he’s a rock star, husband and father to a daughter, with twin girls on the way. As disease information and patient resources were scarce when he was first diagnosed, Dan is “stoked” to represent the patient community and raise awareness about AS by hosting This AS Life Live! In fact, he’s already introduced This AS Life Live! to a
national audience via interviews with People.com, AOL Build and ABC News Radio (just to name a few.)

This AS Life Live! is an interactive talk show for patients with AS by patients with AS, which aims to increase awareness of the impact AS can have and the importance of appropriate disease management. Episodes air on ThisASLife.com [3], a vibrant, online global community. You can also view the episodes on This AS Life’s Facebook [4] and Twitter [5] pages.

References


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[4] https://www.facebook.com/ThisASLife/
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