

LoFric®
1983 2008
25



Overcoming
challenges
together



This is the story of
Patrik, Maritha
and LoFric



ASTRATHECH
HEALTHCARE

25 years with LoFric®



Patrik and Maritha 25 years after their first meeting.

In January, 1983, the traffic accident happened. It wasn't until the next December that Patrik Havlica was able to leave the hospital. But not on foot. During the year, he got to know nurse Maritha Telander very well. She and her colleagues helped him with everything from going to the toilet to providing the psychological support he needed to face an altered daily life.

"The easiest thing is probably to talk with children", says Patrik after 25 years as a wheelchair user.

"They never pretend. I will never forget when I held some table tennis training for a group of kids. A little boy of 5 or 6 came in looking a bit sceptical, and he kept peering at me now and then during the training. At the end he came forward and asked 'Can't you walk?' 'No,' I said 'I can't walk.' Then he stared at me for a long time from under his fringe and finally came out with ... 'Not even a metre?!'"

"That is how a child relates to the world, if you can't even walk one metre then things are pretty bad", laughs Patrik.

From his own perspective, thankfully, life looks considerably brighter.

"You can't turn the clock back, so you must simply look forwards and learn to live with the problems you have", says Patrik.

Maritha gently reminds him that his mood, was actually very up and down during the long time in hospital after the accident.

Patrik had half a year of studying left at Football College when the crash happened.

"I did feel that things had gone a bit bad, but how serious it really was did not strike me. I lay there thinking that the football season had now started and in about three weeks I would be up and running around again ..."





That was not to be. On his 19th birthday, 17th January 1983, he was unconscious due to the pneumonia that struck after 10 days in traction. Patrik spent the next 16 weeks lying down.

Football goals turned into completely different goals. Life goals. A struggle to be able to manage himself. To manage every day. And in due course, to do everything he never had time to do as a young, fit and promising footballer.

"Everyone had a go at me when I got in my wheelchair. With my background, they wanted me to become a disabled athlete. But for me, it was exactly the opposite. I'd had enough of sport, now I wanted to mess around with cars and girls. To get out and travel, meet people and have fun."



Maritha smiles, nods and remembers. Bobsleighing in the mountains at Åre. Enjoying the nightlife.

“Back then we did lots of things like that together, staff and patients”, she says.

“It was a great comfort for both patients and relatives to manage the first time using catheters and other practicalities together with the care staff. There were lots of young lads in the department and one could say that the boundaries were tested.”

When it comes to the catheters, Patrik has had some less pleasant experiences.

“Such as lying in the hospital using plastic catheters with gel. It was hard work. Extremely hard work. It was sticky and slimy and ran everywhere. It was not a high point.”

Maritha shakes her head and grimaces:

“There was a big tube of gel that you had to inject into the urethra every time, since it was a powder-dry, stiff catheter. There was always a little bit of gel remaining after flushing that ran out as a blob in the underpants. And there were not many who drained themselves. You couldn’t use the bag either because patients were supposed to use bedpans.”

“So you had to measure up, but if you flinched everything would fly everywhere”, says Patrik, who admits that it’s easier to laugh at it in hindsight.

But Patrik had luck in his misfortune. The development of disability aids was flourishing at the same time that he was injured. Wheelchairs became smaller and lighter. Better cushions and mattresses came along. And a new catheter, LoFric, was introduced to the market.

“Now we had a better alternative for emptying the bladder optimally”, says Maritha. And later, when you only needed to add normal water, it became even simpler.

Patrik tells of a funny trip to Benidorm during the days when it was still necessary to use saline solution with the LoFric catheter.

“I had my catheters with me, but I didn’t have my 20 bottles of salt. On top of that, we were staying on the seventh floor without a lift.”





The first problem was solved using home-made vodka in the catheter – “spirit is at least clean” – and the other problem with the stairs was solved through strong friends who could carry Patrik.

“We used saline for a long time and rinsed using Clorhexidine at the hospital, we wouldn’t dare anything else”, smiles Maritha.

“But it was an incredible time saving for the staff using LoFric. Partly because the gel disappeared, but also since it no longer needed to be sterile. You can empty more quickly, you can empty completely, there are fewer infections and less hassle with leakage.

And patients learn to drain themselves much more quickly now.”

In 2003, a 1070 metre long roller coaster made of wood was inaugurated at Göteborgs Liseberg amusement park. The spectacular ride, Balder, has a top speed of 90 km/h (55 mph) and the first slope has a downward angle of 70 degrees. The interest in Balder was huge, and in its first season visitors queued for several hours to get a ride.

“I was popular then. I think I went on Balder 70 times that summer. All my friends rang and wanted to join me in the special queue for disabled people. And the staff were kind and often let us go on several times in a row.”

Patrik and Maritha together remember some “teething problems” with LoFric that are now in the past. But now they agree that the catheters work without problems. For Patrik, who travels a lot in his job as a salesman, it is especially important to have a convenient solution.

“Before, I would have needed to have an entire bus with me”, he smiles. “Now, I can put the LoFric catheters at the bottom of my luggage. They take no space, and I always have some with me in my rucksack as well, so that I can manage for a few days if my luggage happens to get lost.”

Maritha interjects that the newer all-in-one catheter sets, such as LoFric® Primo™, have benefits and are even simpler to take along when travelling. These products contain water, which means that you have one less problem. Patrik agrees that the new catheters are convenient to use when you are unsure if there will be access to water, such as on a sailing boat or on a plane.



Fast cars are a passion that Patrik found more time to devote himself to after the accident. A white Porsche has been bought and adapted, as well as a boat. Girlfriend Jeanette thankfully shares his interest. “Jeanette is actually a nurse, but we did NOT meet at the hospital but at a typical dance.”



And travel Patrik did, just as he wanted in his new life. And he also got himself a couple of ladies, in the form of girlfriend Jeanette and their 12-year old daughter Johanna. On the other hand, he was not so successful in holding back entirely from sports when it came to the crunch. There has been both rugby and basketball. As well as others.

"It's that team spirit, where you are part of a group who meet and talk and train, you wouldn't want to be without it. It is hard to find time since I am working so much, but right now we are trying to get a curling team together in order to win the national championships one day."

Patrik's life involves a great deal of travelling, both for work and pleasure. "We have been to Rhodes every year since 1986, apart from '95 when Johanna was born. The year after that, she came too. We are there for three weeks every year. You've got to have a bit of a holiday."

**LoFric – for convenient
and safe use.
Today and tomorrow.**



Over the years, Patrik and Maritha have had time to see many versions of LoFric.

The very first LoFric catheter perhaps does not seem so remarkable today, but when it came, it meant a revolution for catheter users. Suddenly there was a catheter with a hydrophilic surface that you could learn to use yourself. The foundation for Clean Intermittent Catheterisation had been laid.

The hydrophilic surface is achieved using a technology that is unique for Astra Tech – Urotonic™ Surface Technology – and means the catheter has the same salt content as the urethra. This means that the salt and water are neither transported to nor from the catheters surface during the time it is in the urethra. This in turn is an important parameter to avoid damage to the urethra when the catheter is pulled out after the catheterisation.

Today we have 25 years clinical experience of LoFric – the only hydrophilic catheter that is documented to be safe for long-term use – and the history does not end here. Ever since its debut, product developers together with users have continued to develop new LoFric versions for different needs. One of the most recent additions is LoFric Primo, a smart and safe catheter in a foldable and discreet packaging, which apart from the catheter itself also contains water. Several other innovations lie around the corner and the future for the LoFric family looks undoubtedly exciting.



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