



ICU Diary of

Mr. John Miller

Note: This diary is a fictive example with the purpose to show how a diary can be written. All names are fictional.
Due to this purpose, there are no photos of a patient, family, staff or ICU environment included.
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ICU Diary

A stay on an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) can compromise the perception and memory of patients. After ICU, some patients have no or delusional memories.

An ICU diary is written for a patient by the family and staff in everyday language. The patient can read the diary during recovery and understand what happened. A diary can also help the family cope during this difficult period.

Here is some advices for families:

Write about

- The condition of the patient,
- Medical measures,
- Recovery milestones like first opening the eyes, standing or sitting in a chair, coming off the ventilator etc.
- Your feelings, worries and fears,
- Anything that may interest the patient (for example, how is home, what do grandchildren, friends, pets do).

It may be important:

- Try to make an entry of one or two pages each day (depending on your handwriting).
- Write the date and time for each note.
- Focus on the content and not on spelling or calligraphy.
- Ask the staff if you are allowed to take pictures. If you can make photos, make sure that the patient is in the picture with you and the people caring for him.
- Encourage the patient to write something down in the journal themselves
- If possible, complete the entries with colored pictures (for example the grandson).
- Continue writing for some time after transfer from the intensive care unit.
- Read the diary together and respect it if the other person does not want to read it.

If you have any questions, please ask the staff of the ICU.

All the best for you and your beloved one!

For whom you are writing

My full name

John A. Miller

How I spend my time

Children, House keeping, sports, good books, and my wife!
Well often enough my work...

What I am acknowledged for

Open minded, big heart, cheesecake & Christmas biscuits

What I like

Honest information, kindness, nice words

What I dislike

Waiting, not being asked, if it is too noisy

May 30th

Hello John, my name is Christina and I am writing this diary to help you to understand what happened since your admission to hospital. You attended the Emergency Department on 29th May complaining of a sore throat and tiredness. You were finding it difficult to swallow. You were seen by the doctor in the Emergency Department and referred to the ear, nose and throat (ENT) doctor. Your condition was getting progressively worse and you were also experiencing difficulty in breathing and your breathing was noisy. The ENT doctor looked into your throat with a camera. Your epiglottis, at the back of your throat, was very swollen and it was thought that you were suffering from supraglottitis. You were given intravenous antibiotics through a drip and referred to the ICU medical team.

Because your airway was at risk of closing because of the swelling in your throat you had to be intubated. This meant a breathing tube was placed in your windpipe, which was then attached to a ventilator (breathing machine). You were transferred to theatre to have the breathing tube put in at

about 2.30 pm until 15:30. You were sedated (asleep using medications) before the breathing tube was put in. From theatre you are transferred to the ICU at about 3.30 pm.

You remained sedated and the ventilator continued doing the work of breathing for you. You had an arterial line inserted in your right wrist to enable close monitoring of your blood pressure. Blood samples were sent to the lab to check for the any bugs that may be causing your infection.

You continued to receive antibiotics and steroids to help you fight the infection and bring the swelling down. Your temperature was raised. The ICU doctors spoke to your family to explain that you were critically ill and explain what was being done to treat you.

Christina, RN

31st May

The ENT doctor came to see you today and looked into your throat with a camera again. There is still a lot of swelling but this seems to have reduced a little bit. To give the swelling more time to go down the breathing tube is remaining in place until the weekend then you will be seen again.

Missy, RN

1st June

Hi John, we noticed you had a lot more colour today. Me and Mummy visited but you didn't have much to say for yourself. Going away for the weekend so will visit Monday. I will ring Tom as I leave now (1 pm Friday).

Love L & Mum

1st June

You are still sedated and the ventilator is continuing to do the work of breathing for you and you are needing 50% oxygen. At 11 am I helped you to wash. Following your

wash you were rolled onto one side and then the other so
we could change your sheets. Your mouth was also cleaned
using mouthwash and sponges and the tapes holding your
breathing tube are changed for clean ones.

Mary, RN

1st June

Hi Love, been to see you every day hoping you are a lot
better when you finally come around. Been to Bookers with
our friends, got Lena some of her favourite drink. Chris and
all your mates from work keep ringing to see how you are,
also all the family mine and yours are keeping in touch. Gill
said he would have a drink for you in the pub seeing it is
Friday today. Love you.

1st June

Hi Dad. Been coming everyday with mum, not been at
work. So been able to spend time with Luda while she's off
school. We've been staying at yours so mum's not on her
own. Luda can't wait to see you, though she has been liking

sleeping in the same bedroom as me. Our Doris and Dean came to see you on Wednesday. They're coming again tomorrow. Just been for some tea, fish, chips and peas, it was alright. Going home soon. Pete's picking us up about 6.30 pm he wants to watch England vs Brazil. Will let you know the score. Pete's looking after your car, he's been bringing us to see you. Speak to you soon.

Love Danny

Sat 2nd June

Hiya Dad.

It's Saturday today – a beautiful day outside. I couldn't believe it when I heard what happened. I'm starting to think you have a lot in common with Chip the cat, what with your nine lives and everything. I've brought you some car magazines but there's no room here so they are at home if you get bored when you wake up you'll have to get mum to bring them in. Off for a pizza this evening. By the way the football ended England 1 Brazil 1, John Terry scored the goal from a David Beckham free kick. See you soon.

Love Doris & Dean xxx

Sat 2nd June

Hi Love. Chris & Joe have been our house today to see how you are. They said to tell you to get better soon. He wants to see you fishing in the lake wearing a kilt. Everyone is asking about you. I am keeping work informed. Luda says hello.

Love you

Jill

2nd June

You are still sedated. Your condition has been stable and very much the same. You are receiving medication to keep you asleep and to avoid any pain. I hope that you feel comfortable. Some patients have told us afterwards that they listened to voices and sounds but had difficulties understanding them. The ventilator seemed to sound like a

steam engine, or that lying on the mattress felt like being on a boat. Have you had these kinds of perceptions?

Mary, RN

2nd June

Hi. Come for a visit bit later than usual. It's now 6pm, not had our tea yet. Don't think we'll be going café today. So see you tomorrow if I'm not working otherwise see you

Monday.

Dan

Sunday 3rd June

Hi Love

Me and our Susan here today. Dean has gone to work.

Can't wait to talk to you. A lot of fun went on last night with next door Jill & Chris. Manchester United have got 3 new players. Luda & Doris went to Tatton Park in TVR.

Thought they were the bees knees.

Love you Jill

3rd June

You are still sedated and the ventilator is continuing to do the work of breathing for you. You are receiving 30% oxygen. Your temperature is up. At about 8 pm you were rolled to change your sheets. When we talked to you, you opened your eyes and raised your hand a little bit. You were then settled back on your back and you started coughing. Your ventilator settings were adjusted and you had a nebuliser (medicine delivered through an aerosol system into your airway). You had a chest X-ray and further sedation. You then settled. The doctors had a look in your throat to look at the swelling and it is still there.

Doris, RN

4th June

Hi John

You remain sedated and the ventilator is still doing the work breathing for you. You are needing 30-40% oxygen and your temperature is still raised. The ENT doctor looked at the swelling again– this seems to have gone down a bit.

He will see you again on Wednesday. You have moderate amounts of phlegms on suction. Sometimes when it is noisy in the ICU, your eyebrows come together and your blood pressure rises a little bit ... and I wonder if you feel stressed by the environment? There are other patients in the room and staff of course, and maybe you feel worried? Please be assure that all the staff and your family are taking care of you!

Don, RN

Monday 4th June

Hi, came at lunchtime today with Mum. You will be upset when you know how nice the weather is. Your big boys toys car would have been brill out for a run. You are a lot more mobile, restless today. Nurse says you're fighting the sedation. They have just taken 8 more blood for microbiology. We will see you later in the week.

Love

Luda & mum

4th June

Hi love, your Luda rang me when she got home from visiting you. I rang early when the ENT had been to see you. The swelling had not gone down enough. Everyone is asking about you. Rang your work again today to keep them up to date on your progress. Pete has swapped his shift this week from 2-10 to 6-2. Then he can bring me and Dean and look after our Luda while we are visiting you. Can't wait for you to get better.

Love you, Jill

Hi Dad

Come today as I was at work yesterday, people were asking how you are. I just touched your foot and you tried to open your eyes. The nurse is going to put the radio on for you Radio 2 or GMR. Should keep you amused when you come round a bit. See you tomorrow.

Love Doris

P.S L can't wait to see you.

Hi again. Just been for some food in the canteen (17:45). I had Lasagna, mum had a butty. It was quite nice, thought we'd go while you weren't very chatty anyway. Speak to you soon.

Doris.

5th June

You remain sedated and on the ventilator. Your temperature is normal this morning. You are to stay sedated today and you will be reviewed by the ENT doctor again tomorrow.

You seem to have stabilised a little bit, and when we are talking to you, you move your eyes behind closed lids. You seem to be free of pain and relaxed.

Mary, RN

Tues 5th June

Hi Love. It's me again, been every day. The sun has been out again today, lets hope when you get better the sun is

still out then you can go for a drive in your spitfire. I gave it an airing, opened the garage door. The phone bill might need raising again it has been like a telephone exchange.

Shows everybody is thinking about you. Our Y & D are going to Hakes tomorrow as it's our N & G's wedding on Thursday.

Love you, Jill

June 6th

Hi Dad Me again, the curtain was round when we came. So had to wait for a bit. L's had her hair cut just before we came to see you. She loves it, I think it's a bit too old for her but it's nice. The weather is lovely, been having a bit of a sunbathe. You never know I might have a tan by the time you see me, oh well P will be coming for us soon it's 6.10 pm so see you tomorrow.

Doris

June 6th

Hi, the nurse has just put a nebuliser on your oxygen – you have a bit of gunk on your chest. You look more restful than last time we saw you. A went to doctors yesterday. It's just old age and good living. Have texted Annie & Paul to let them know how you are. I have got a sick note until Monday. Will see you again soon. Jill & Doris have just arrived.

Take care.

Luda & Mum

Wed 6th June

Hi Love. Here again, seems a long time since I last spoke to you. The weather has been lovely again. Me & Luda watched Charlotte's web last night. She has been really good company. Bedroom can't move, have 2 beds in her room, 1 for her and 1 for Doris. She thinks she is camping out as she is in a sleeping bag. Everybody is still asking about you. Having to tape a lot for you, there was no

antiques road show on Sunday, also no time team. Taped
lots of cop programmes, plenty to watch when you finally
get home. Love you,

Jill

Wed. 6th June

Hi, here again it's bloody boiling in here, bet you're glad
you're asleep, you'd be sweating like a pig. We've noticed
how good your skin's looking, have to keep drinking plenty
of water when you get home. The swelling has gone down a
bit more so hopefully you'll be awake in the next couple of
days. They've just been making you cough. Mum left for a
bit, didn't want to watch you gag. Dean's been ringing
everyday. She's coming down when you wake up.

Love, Doris

6th June

You are still sedated and have been seen by the
physiotherapy. Your phlegm is very thick on suction. Your
condition is stable. Sam, RN

7th June

You were seen by the ENT doctor this morning and the plan is for your sedation to be reduced today. When it was reduced at 11 am you began to do some of the breathing through the ventilator. The support you get from the ventilator has been reduced so you are doing more of the breathing on your own. When you opened your eyes, I talked to you and informed you that you are on the ICU.

You raised your eyebrows as if you were surprised and did not know this. This is normal for a lot of patients. Some need a couple of days to wake up and become fully orientated, maybe you will too. We will help you and your family through this period.

Mary, RN

June 7th Wednesday

Hi Rip Van Winkle. Time to wake up. They have reduced your sedation and I think you can hear what we are saying.

If you wake up early enough today they will remove the

tube. If not they will give you mild sedation until tomorrow
am. Jill has gone spending your money on a wedding outfit.
You've saved on your new clothes. Mum's very pleased
you are opening your eyes. Will ring Jill.

Love

Luda & Mum

8th June

Today at about 10am you have a tracheostomy. This
involves a small operation to replace the tube that was in
your mouth with one, which goes into your windpipe
through the skin of your neck. This will be more
comfortable for you when you wake up fully. You were
sedated for the tracheostomy procedure. Then following
this your sedation was stopped again to allow you to wake
up. You began to wake slowly and you also began to move
your arms. Your family visited you and were pleased to see
you more awake.

Danny, RN

9th June

You are breathing yourself with support from the ventilator.

Today your weaning will be continued. Your ventilator setting was changed at 3 pm to allow you to do more of the breathing for yourself. You may tire and need further support so you are been monitored closely.

Liz, RN

10th June

You managed well doing the breathing for yourself. You have continued doing the breathing for yourself with minimal support since yesterday afternoon. The cuff on your tracheostomy tube was deflated today at midday. This is a further step in your coming off the ventilator. You have a good strong cough now and are able to cough your own phlegm. At 8 pm your breathing support was changed again and you are now receiving oxygen via a tracheostomy mask and breathing completely on your own. The ventilator has been removed.

Rosie, RN

11th June

Hello and good morning. It's nice to see you sat up and awake. You appear bright in mood and smiling. It's 11 am now. You are continuing to breathe through your tracheostomy and mask. The physiotherapist is with you at present. You received some suction to clear phlegm and some exercises to strengthen your limbs.

It's 11 am, your tracheostomy tube has just been removed and you are breathing through a face mask. The tracheostomy site has a dressing on it to allow it to heal.

You are happy to have your voice back. You have a big smile.

Christina, RN

June 11th

You were transferred to the high dependency unit at 10 pm.

Bob, MD
