

I was diagnosed midway in Secondary 1 with three autoimmune diseases – Autoimmune Hepatitis, PSC and Ulcerative Colitis. From an outgoing, hyperactive preteen, I became weary and self-depreciating, and did not have a lot of self-confidence. Furthermore, my studies suffered as I struggled to cope with my illnesses. Some of my symptoms included debilitating fatigue and itching. I also had many medical appointments and blood tests. These made it difficult for me to be consistent with my attendance at school. It didn't help that on some days, I had to leave school halfway due to my poor health. It was thanks to the efforts of my teachers who helped me that I managed to catch up on my studies. Some of my teachers met me after school hours for one-on-one lessons, while others re-explained concepts to me when I was in doubt. They never berated me for falling behind and just focused on helping me keep up. There was also a period of time where I turned to self-harm. I remember that my teacher pulled me aside once class was over and spent an entire afternoon counseling me because she caught a glimpse of my scars. That incident eventually led me to stop this negative behaviour, and I have been well since.

I graduated in 2016 with 2 distinctions and an aggregate of 11 points. Eventually, I also had a liver transplant, and have since written a medical biography called *How to Be a Good Patient* under the alias, Y.K. Riley with the help of Make-A-Wish Singapore. I currently study Law and Management at Temasek Polytechnic and am working with various organisations to raise awareness about invisible illnesses.



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