# Nursing student experiences Madonna from patient angle

Ali Hassan has always been drawn to the sciences. The 35-year-old Pakistan native came to the United States as a teen and earned a bachelor of science degree in environmental services from Creighton University. Ali's goal was to continue with medical school, but his father passed away, and Ali's career focus shifted to nursing.

Ali was no stranger to hospitals. He was born with a rare vascular disorder, Klippel Trenaunay Syndrome, a malformation of vascular vessels and soft tissue. He saw the enormous impact nurses have on each patient and felt it would be a rewarding career. "I've been in and out of hospitals all my life and realized nursing is a way to really touch people," said Ali

He secured a job at Creighton University Medical Center (CUMC) and soon became a certified nursing assistant. Under a special program at CUMC, Ali was financially able to take his career one step further.

In 2008, Ali was accepted in the licensed practical nursing (LPN) program at Southeast Community College (SCC) in Lincoln and began commuting to classes from Omaha. Ali's first introduction to Madonna came as part of the SCC nursing curriculum. "I did my clinical rotation at Madonna and was very impressed with your facility," said Ali. Unbeknownst to the future nurse, he'd soon discover Madonna from the patient side.

On April 23, 2009, Ali had been recently preapproved for a home loan and decided to visit a property after leaving his afternoon shift. He was walking around the house when he tripped and fell, breaking his left femur. "I went down hard – my whole senses seemed to be knocked out," said Ali.

He quickly realized his cell phone was in the car and began yelling for help. A young woman heard his cries and called 911.

Ali was stabilized at Midlands Hospital then transferred to CUMC for surgery on his broken leg. Because of his vascular disorder, a special vascular team was assembled.

The doctors inserted a titanium rod running from Ali's hip bone to his knee. After four days of healing, he realized rehabilitation was the next step and chose Madonna.

Ali Hassan practices walking the hallways with Physical Therapist Tim Bausch.

"My first priority was to walk," said Ali. Tim Bausch, physical therapist, noted that Ali was unable to walk on admission and needed assistance for all transfers. Following three weeks of intensive therapy, Ali is now independent, walking 200 feet with a front-wheeled walker and going up and down six inch curb steps to access his apartment.

Ali found the Therapy Gym was not only a venue for physical therapy, but exposed him to other patients. "I observed patients who were worse off than myself and felt less bitter about my own situation, more grateful," said Ali.

Life on the patient side was educational to Ali in other ways. "I can now understand the frustrations patients go through," said Ali. The day the accident happened, Ali recalled placing a catheter in a patient and by evening, he ended up having the same procedure done to him. "It's extremely hard to be fully dependent on others," he added.

An avid outdoorsman, Ali looks forward to resuming his love of camping and exploring parks. He has two quarters left to complete his LPN certification and plans to resume classes in October. He hopes to return to Madonna to complete his clinicals—armed with a renewed sense of empathy for his patients.

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