



Laura Marsden – From Swindon, UK, 26 shares her story for SUDEP Awareness Day



Laura Marsden holds up a SUDEP Awareness Day Poster

How has your epilepsy affected you?

The main thing my epilepsy has affected is my ability to be independent. Losing my driving licence 3 times is the worst as I now depend on public transport or other people for things like shopping. It also affects me day to day with headaches, sometimes I am in crippling pain and seizures affect my confidence and anxiety. People don't always understand how it feels and what your body goes through during a seizure which makes it frustrating.

You have had epilepsy since the age of 19, when did you learn about SUDEP?

I first learned of SUDEP around 18 months ago. To be honest it was a real eye opener as to how serious my condition can be. I didn't really take my epilepsy too seriously before that as I didn't want to let it affect my life more than it had already. I still live by this but I'm more cautious around the house and at night. I now ensure I take my medication at the same time each day and ensure I eat regularly.

How did you learn about SUDEP?

Via neurology and then I heard a lot more about it from charities. When I first heard about SUDEP I didn't know too much and on researching how I can reduce my risks, I came across SUDEP Action.

How did you feel when you first heard about SUDEP?

I felt quite anxious to be honest. Apart from my epilepsy I'm really healthy so it was worrying to hear that this has happened to people and I also felt a little angry that people are affected by epilepsy and SUDEP with little government awareness and support.

How has knowing about SUDEP positively influenced the lifestyle choices you make in managing your epilepsy?

I was asked to complete some risk assessments and this has helped me to be more cautious around the house and with how I manage my seizures. I wish I'd known sooner so I could make alternative lifestyle choices as I currently live alone which is pretty dangerous.

How did you hear about SUDEP Action?

I was first made aware of the charity via social media from following other Epilepsy charities and thought it was great that awareness was being raised.

How would you say knowing and talking about SUDEP has helped you?

It's helped me when thinking about my future and also in putting together plans for how to deal with seizures if I'm alone. I'm awaiting an Android version of the EpSMon App for which I've signed up to an email reminder.

Would you encourage others with epilepsy to find out about SUDEP and discuss it with their health care team? If yes why?

Yes everyone should know how serious SUDEP is so they can make positive changes to ensure the risks are minimal and also so that loved ones can be fully aware.