This is a story written by a 40 year old male who presented with neurological symptoms during Covid and was only diagnosed after a freak accident some 18 months later when an ophthalmologist noticed Kayser-Fleischer rings in his eyes: ©

The first time I noticed symptoms was in March 2020 after a friend's stag do. I was eating cereal and I couldn't stop my hand shaking. Initially I put it down to overconsumption of alcohol the night before, but over the next few days and weeks it didn't get any better. I decided it was time to go to the G.P.

By then the dreaded Covid had struck so I was only able to have a Zoom call with my doctor. He thought the symptoms would pass but when they didn't he asked me to go into the surgery to have a some blood tests done. These all came back negative and he therefore concluded I was suffering from Covid anxiety, which I thought quite unlikely as I am generally a laid back type of guy. I was used to running marathons and triathlons and was always on the go, with a normal resting heart rate of around 45 bpm.

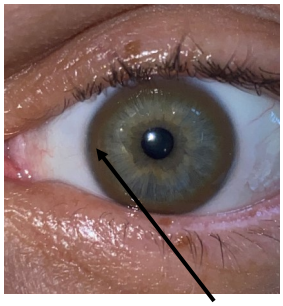
My tremors got worse, though I didn't have any other symptoms, or so I thought. The doctor still diagnosed it as Covid stress. However, at Christmas '21 things took a dramatic turn.

I run a printing business and every year we have a Christmas party at which we play silly games. This year we decided to take Nerf guns and have a battle after dinner (and a couple of drinks!) For those of you who don't know what Nerf guns are, they fire foam bullets with a hard plastic end. All was good fun until I got hit in my left eye with one of the bullets and partially lost my vision.

The following day was Christmas Eve. I woke up and thought it was much better but by the time I was in Santa's Grotto with the children later in the day I knew there was a problem! I went straight to A&E where I received treatment. They told me to book an appointment with Eye Casualty, which I did for Boxing Day.

"It won't be Wilson's; it's never Wilson's"

However, at 8.00 o'clock, Eye Casualty rang me to ask me to attend on Christmas Day instead. Concerned that something worrying had been found, Christmas lunch was put on hold! My dad gave me a lift to the hospital and waited with me. It was 4 hours before I got out by which time he had finished the book I had just bought him for Christmas!



What the Doctor Saw

At Eye Casualty the process seemed slow and now I understand why. Something worrying **had** been found! I was reassured that my eye sight would return to normal, but the ophthalmologist, Dr Rajammal, asked if I had any hereditary illnesses. When I said, "No," he asked me about my tremor which he said he couldn't help noticing. He also explained that he had seen copper deposits called Kayser-Fleischer rings around the corneas of my eyes which would suggest that I had a illness called Wilson's disease. I had naturally never heard of Wilson's disease and rang a friend who is a doctor as soon as I got home. My friend said, "It won't be Wilson's; it's never Wilson's!" With that kind of response, it is no wonder patients have difficulty getting an early diagnosis.

A month later I was given an official diagnosis. That same day my wife joined WDSG-UK's Fb Group and explained what her interest was in Wilson's disease. Valerie messaged her privately. Once it was established I had a neurological presentation and wasn't being seen at a specialist hospital, with my permission Valerie put me in touch with specialist Wilson's disease doctors at UCL in Queen Square, London. I continue to see consultants at my local hospital so they can all work together. I have received excellent care from everybody involved which no doubt has been instrumental in my making a good and speedy recovery.

When I started chelation treatment, my tremors got worse for 9 months and my speech became affected, but now 14 months later my symptoms are very mild. Unfortunately, my liver has been badly damaged but I hope that this will improve with time. I will be 41 this year.

Reflecting on events, it was the Nerf bullet in my eye which led to my diagnosis. I am so grateful that someone took aim at me and succeeded in hitting me, as without this the Wilson's disease diagnosis could have been further delayed and the outcome could have been a lot worse. I feel very lucky.