

UNUSUAL CANCER PATIENTS

I propose to illustrate some true stories of cancer patients. There are many patients who have shown unusual courage to fight cancer. There are some others who showed rapid development of cancer with unexpected deterioration. The same treatment given for same stage of cancer in different patients may not produce same results, which are variable due to undisclosed or unknown factors. Many patients, worried about adverse comments from orthodox medical practitioners, did not initially tell what extra efforts they were taking to deal with the disease. A cancer patient wants to get cured as soon as possible by whatever means he believes would help. The relatives are ready to go to any extent to try new methods and new medicines, which might not have been proved to help in cancer. In such a hurry, sometimes there can be a danger of submitting to a worthless treatment or even a harmful treatment. Everyday, some well-wishers suggest some new miracle medicine. With the advent of Internet surfing, one could get easily submerged in a sea of information on the web. It is hard and confusing to sort out what could be useful in an individual situation. It is best to have some sympathetic and experienced doctor to consult in such matters for the right advice. Many things may be working but one individual cannot undertake too many methods at one time.

Following true stories, which defy the statistics, could be interesting since each one illustrates certain subtle points. The names of the patients have been changed for the sake of professional confidentiality. Most are the stories of my own patients, although some stories are quoted from other doctors and their published works.

1. A throat cancer survivor:

Vishwanath, a retired professor, developed cancer of throat (supraglottic area) in 1975 when he was 65 years old. He was examined in a cancer hospital in Mumbai and was advised to take a full course of radiation treatments. Since the patient was from Pune, he took the treatments in Pune. He developed moderate radiation reactions, which subsided after 4 weeks from the end of radiotherapy. He was re-examined and was told that his cancer has disappeared. After about 1 year, Vishwanath noticed a gland in the left side of the neck,

which was due to spread of the cancer to the lymph node. At this time, he consulted me at the Bombay Hospital. I examined and found that the cancer had recurred in the throat and had spread to the lymph nodes in the neck. The patient, who thought he was cured, was disappointed. At this time a second course of radiotherapy was given to the neck area. The patient, who was very cooperative and a noble person, faithfully completed the second course of radiation, which was planned carefully to avoid overexposure of radiation. At the end of radiation, the nodes shrunk more than 75% and the throat tumor more than 60%.

He was anxious about the future health. At this time, Dr. B.G Wad had done research on Bhallatak (*semicarpus anacardium*) in Mumbai. An oral jelly from this herbal nut, Anacarcin, was marketed by Bombay Pharmaceutical Company. I suggested the patient to take this medicine twice daily for 6 months. Fortunately, at the end of 6 months I found that the neck node and the throat tumor both had almost disappeared. Encouraged by the results, I advised the patient to continue Anacarcin for some more time. Vishwanath eagerly continued Anacarcin for the next 5 years. On regular check ups till 1980, he was found to be in very good health, good spirits and free of any nodes or cancer tumor. He passed away at the age of 80 years due to a sudden heart attack, unrelated to his cancer.

It is not unusual to control an early stage throat cancer with radiotherapy alone. However in this case, cancer had come back and spread to the nodes within first year after radiotherapy. Under this situation, chances of cure were very minimal. I believe that Anacarcin and the patient's faith in the treatment were mainly responsible for the cure.

2. A boy with fibro-sarcoma- a cancerous tumor under the skin:

Pramod, a 12-year-old boy was brought to me by his father at Jaslok Hospital in 1973. This boy had twice undergone operations to remove a tumor on the left arm in the previous year. Unfortunately, the tumor had recurred at the same place within 8 months after the operation. It was again operated but was likely to recur if nothing else was done. After examination, I advised a course of local radiation to the operated area to minimize chance of relapse. Patient completed the course of radiation within the next few weeks. At that time, we were trying some ayurvedic medicine orally and ayurvedic oil for local application. Patient continued on this supplementary treatment for more than a year. At regular follow-ups over the next five years, he was found to be in good health and free of cancer. We still meet occasionally as

good friends. This boy, who had philosophical inclinations from the childhood, has now become a Sanyasin and pursues a religious life helping other devotees in an ashram in Pune. It is now more than 30 years since his initial diagnosis of tumor.

I feel that in addition to radiotherapy, supplementary ayurvedic treatment, faith and religious orientation prompting this boy on the path of meditation and yoga has helped tremendously to overcome the disease.

3. Meenaben, a woman who had cancer of left ear:

Meenaben, a 60 years old pleasant and righteous woman from Gujarat, was operated at Bombay Hospital in 1992 for a cancer in the left ear. The ear and the surrounding bone were removed and she no longer could hear on the left side. She was referred to me for a post-operative course of radiotherapy that was completed in Feb. 1992. The patient was very careful about her health and came for yearly follow-ups for the next 10 years all the way from her native place. In the last follow up in Feb. 2002, I was happy to see her in good spirits and good health and no evidence of recurrence of cancer. In between she did have some transient complaints like cataract, arthritis, urinary infections etc that were cured.

Recently, learning about my interest in holistic medicine, she triumphantly mentioned the secret of her good health. She was taking water therapy that she thought helped her to bring down her high blood pressure. She also mentioned about an ayurvedic herb from Gujarat, Krishnavalli, which she had been taking since her treatment in 1992. She even sent me an old Gujarathi transcript, which she found in her old family treasures, about the properties of this herb. She wanted me to experiment with this herb for cancer treatment. When we got to know each other better, I learnt that she was a regular practitioner of Yoga, Pranayama and Meditation. I am sure all these complementary methods have gone a long way in controlling her cancer over the past 10 years.

4. Shobha with cancer of uterus:

I met this active woman in 1977, when she was only 32 years old. She had advanced cancer of uterus for which we gave her a short course of radiation at Bombay Hospital before the operation by Dr. B. N. Purandare to remove her uterus. Soon after the operation, remaining

half of radiation treatment was also administered. We advised supplemental ayurvedic treatment to minimize her radiation reactions and to improve her general condition. She comes regularly for check-ups, the last one being in December 2001, almost 24 years since her initial diagnosis of cancer. She has been disease free and in very good health all three years. I again feel that her positive attitude, faith and ayurvedic supplemental medicines have helped her a great deal in the cure of her disease.

5. Bansidhar, a case of cancer of esophagus, (food-pipe):

This 45 years old businessman from Secundarabad received radiation treatment at Bombay Hospital in 1980 for his advanced cancer of the middle part of esophagus. A jovial and energetic man, Bansidhar had positive attitude to look at all the things in the life. I instructed him to prepare Bhallatak (*Semicarpus anacardium*) medicinal milk at his home for daily consumption. He followed the instructions carefully and cheerfully. He used to come for regular check ups over the next 10 years and we found that his cancer had completely disappeared as confirmed by repeated x-ray tests. He had no problem for eating and was doing his business as usual. Cancer of esophagus is a dangerous disease, not easy to control. I believe bhallatak milk has helped him greatly in addition to his cheerful attitude.

6. Vinayak, another case of cancer of esophagus, (food-pipe):

This 60 years old man started a course of 9 cycles of chemotherapy in Mumbai in Jan 1998, for his cancer of food-pipe. He joined our Ayurvedic Cancer Project and started attending Dr. Sardeshmukh's clinic in Mumbai right from the beginning of the chemotherapy. Vinayak's mother, brother and sisters had various cancers indicating strong family history of risk for cancer. Because of this background, he was anxious to do all he could to cure his cancer. With simultaneous supplemental ayurvedic treatments, he tolerated the strong chemotherapy sessions fairly well without any severe side effects. After the completion of chemotherapy course, he was given radiotherapy course at some other hospital in Mumbai. Over the past 3 years, he does not have any cancer seen on his x-rays and scans. At the last check up in May 2002, he was found to be in good health and busy in his usual activities. He is now kept on Rasayana ayurvedic medicines as a preventive measure.

7. A cancer patient who responded to water injections:

From the book “ Love, Medicine and Miracles” by Bernie Siegel, M.D., I quote the following dramatic story about the role of positive attitude and faith in the treatment of cancer. Mr. Wright, a patient in New York suffering from advanced cancer of lymph nodes (lymphosarcoma), was under the treatment of Dr. Klopfer in 1957. Mr. Wright had developed orange sized multiple nodes in neck, armpits, groins, chest and abdomen. All the known treatments had proved ineffective. The liver and the spleen were enormously enlarged. His lungs used to pour milky water in chest that had to be removed frequently with aspiration. He had to have oxygen to breath and he was on heavy doses of sedations. Despite his bad condition, Mr. Wright had great hope.

At that time a new drug, Krebiozen, was being tested for cancer treatment. It was an experimental drug and Mr. Wright did not qualify to receive this trial drug because of his terminal cancer condition. However, at the insistence of the patient, Dr. Klopfer was successful in obtaining this drug for Mr. Wright. A wonder happened when this trial medicine was given to Mr. Wright, who soon started to walk around the ward, chatting happily with the nurses. Mr. Wright’s nodes started melting like butter and within 10 days his tumors vanished, his condition became normal and he was discharged from the hospital. He took off in his own aeroplane and flew at height of 12000 feet quite comfortably.

Mr. Wright was all right for a few months when doubts about Krebiozen started appearing in the newspapers, which greatly disturbed him. Mr. Wright soon developed recurrence of his lymphosarcoma. His condition rapidly worsened. Dr. Klopfer, curious to investigate this further, told the patient that some shipments of the trial drug were defective hence there were some doubts. The doctor further told the patient that a new shipment of the drug would soon arrive. Mr. Wright was greatly relieved by this reassurance. He was ecstatic to learn that the new injections would be started on him in a couple of days time. With much fanfare, the pure version of the drug, (in reality distilled water), was given as injections. The results were dramatic with even better shrinkage of the nodes and marked improvement in health from his “terminal state”! Water injections were continued since these worked wonders. He was all right for the next two months when finally the American Medical Association published a report that Krebiozen was really worthless in cancer treatment. This proved to be a heart

breaking news for Mr. Wright, who suddenly started deteriorating. His cancer nodes came back and he passed away within the next few days.

There are many more intriguing true stories about cancer. I am sure most of the doctors, who have treated cancer patients, would be able to narrate unusual stories about their patients. The simple truth is, happy people generally don't get sick. One's attitude towards oneself is the single most important factor in staying healthy and preventing disease. Faith plays a great role.

Reviewing a large number of cancer patients who were “spontaneously cured”, Canadian Professor Dr. Harold Foster found in 1988 that most of these patients had made major dietary changes— usually switching to vegetarian diet and avoiding white flour, refined sugars and canned foods, before the “cure” happened!

I believe that positive optimistic attitude coupled with complementary treatments combined with judicious use of conventional methods would go a long way in reversing cancer process and produce much better results. If you wish to read more stories about unusual cancer patients, please refer to following books:

1. Love, Medicine & Miracles, by Bernie Siegel, M.D., (Arrow Publication)
2. A Definitive Guide to Cancer, Alternative Therapies, by Burton Goldberg, W. John Diamond & W. Lee Cowden; (Future Medicine Publishing, Inc)
3. Manifesto For A New Medicine, by James S. Gordon, M.D., (Perseus Books)
4. Options, The Alternative Cancer Therapy Book, by Richard Walters, (Avery Publishing)