

Correspondence

Sorting Through Cancer Therapies

I have just read Ralph W. Moss' excellent book *Cancer Therapy, "The Independent Consumer's Guide to Non-Toxic Treatment and Prevention."*¹ This reviews nearly 100 alternative cancer treatments, ranging from Coley's Toxins to cesium supplementation, providing some 1,000 references to the relevant standard peer-reviewed scientific literature. Nevertheless, it would appear to me that, in order to attempt a rational treatment choice the cancer patient would probably need half a dozen doctorates. One of the major reasons for this is that it is almost always impossible to answer the two key questions "What percentage of cancer patients choosing this alternative treatment can expect to significantly improve their life expectancy and at what price to their quality of life?"

For society to approach these questions scientifically would require an enormous investment in both time and money. If the assessment of the preventive value of selenium is any yardstick, some 30 years and a minimum of \$50 million will be required for each substance under investigation.² In the meantime, of course, countless millions of cancer patients will die. Surely, there must be a better lateral thinking approach to the assessment of competing conventional and unconventional cancer treatment protocols?³

I should like to suggest, but unfortunately do not have the capital to fund, one possible approach: a cancer treatment competition. In such a contest, each participating organization would be required to treat an equal number of cancer patients suffering from the same specific illness diagnosed at the same stage.

Logically, this competition would involve fairly large (+200?) groups of matched patients, each suffering from a common cancer; for example of the colon, breast or prostate. Survival rates and quality of life could be independently assessed at regular intervals and the results widely publi-

cized. To ensure an even playing field, grants might be provided to permit organizations promoting lesser known treatments to participate. The eventual winning organization (together with its associated treatment protocol) would receive enormous prestige, in addition to a large financial award. While this type of competition has its associated problems, it would soon sort out reality from rhetoric.

Harold D. Foster Ph.D.
University of Victoria
P.O. Box 3050
Victoria, BC V8W 3P5

References

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2. Foster HD: Selenium and cancer: a geographical perspective. *J Orthomol Med*, 1998; 13 (1): 8-10.
3. De Bono E: *Tactics: The art and science of success*. London. Fontana/Collins. 1987, 256pp.