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ABSTRACTS

The War on Cancer: One Physician Is Winning Dr. Nicholas Gonzalez



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By Terri Mitchell

Has your doctor ever handed you a prescription for carrots? Probably not. But if research confirms what some scientists have been saying for years, diet may become the big gun in the war on cancer. After years of resistance, The National Cancer Institute (NCI) is finally taking a look at alternative cancer therapies involving diet and nutrient supplementation. DR. NICHOLAS GONZALEZ is one of the few physicians who has gotten their attention.

This establishment doctor-turned-rebel is beating the odds on pancreatic cancer - one of our worst killers. As part of a clinical trial, Gonzalez has ten pancreatic cancer patients who, for the most part, are doing well. Some have already survived as long as two years. None have been treated with radiation or chemotherapy.

A DEPARTURE FROM TRADITIONAL THERAPY

Traditional cancer therapy is designed to kill the cancer. The problem is that destroying cancer cells with drugs and radiation cripples immunity and ravages healthy cells. Dr. Gonzalez' therapy is built around the concept of making the body eradicate its own illness, rather than obliterating it with outside forces. The idea is simple, yet so different from the current slash-and-burn approach that it is hard to believe it could work. The method Gonzalez uses to coerce the body into marshaling its forces against cancer is also hard to accept.

Diet is one of the primary weapons he employs. Gonzalez' research demonstrates that selected foods (along with other factors) can actually turn the tide against cancer. Food can create such an inhospitable environment for cancer that it gives up. This is partly due to the fact that food *changes the biochemistry of the entire body*, not just one part. This ensures that the cancer can't simply move to another area of the body.

The concept of treating disease with diet is not new. The ancient Greeks preserved several thousand years of medical wisdom in the Hippocratic Oath, which instructs that disease be treated with diet first. If diet fails, the Oath advises drugs. If drugs fail, surgery is the last recourse. Medieval practitioners had a cast knowledge of pharmacology, yet they, too, chose diet as the "*fyrste instrument of medicine*." One has to wonder, though, why a person would choose what is essentially ancient philosophy over all modern science has to offer.

A VISIT TO DR. GONZALEZ' OFFICE

I ventured into the wilds of Manhattan during a blizzard in January to find out. Dr. Gonzalez' office is Zen-like. Panels of wood and rice-paper take the edge off his serious business at hand. "Not a molecule of formaldehyde," he tells me. Clearly, he believes in the benefits of "natural". Softspoken yet determined, Gonzalez begins with a phrase that could have come from the lips of Hippocrates himself. "Disease is an imbalance of autonomic physiology. The goal is to balance the nervous system." Balance is accomplished through diet, nutrient supplementation, and detoxification.

Dr. Gonzalez is a graduate of Cornell Medical College, not exactly off-the-beaten-medical-path. His post-graduate training was at Vanderbilt, and he holds a degree from Brown. He has training in immunology, yet the word "T-cell" doesn't cross his lips. He is not worried about the immune system, he tells me. The important thing is to treat the nervous system. This is odd talk, but



strangely consistent with the emerging science of psychoneuroimmunology, which takes the view that the immune and neuroendocrine systems are interrelated - one effects the other. But food? Vitamins? Enzymes and enemas? "Yes," he tells me, "the body has enormous power to heal itself in given the right tools."

THE CASE OF EDMUND RUBIN

Edmund Rubin agrees. Diagnosed with renal cell carcinoma in 1990 at age 66, Rubin would be lucky to see his 67th birthday. Surgery revealed that the cancer had spread to a lymph node. Since kidney cancer does not usually respond to chemotherapy or radiation, Rubin's doctor advised him to enroll in an experimental trial of interferon (an immune-enhancing synthetic cytokine). Despite the exhausting treatment, another tumor the size of an orange appeared on his skull a few months later.



Disillusioned, and down to 105 pounds, the retired executive decided to follow the advice of a woman he had met and see Dr. Gonzalez. He was, as he put it, "in pretty bad shape" when he arrived in Gonzalez' office. Looking back, he credits his willingness to try Dr. Gonzalez' alternative therapy to two things: he didn't have much to lose, and the woman who referred him to the doctor had recovered from cancer herself.

Gonzalez put him on a program of organic vegetables, fish, supplements and detoxification. For the first two months, nothing extraordinary happened. But Rubin stuck to the new diet anyway. Within five months the tumor was gone, and his tests improved dramatically. About a year after he began the program, his weight returned to normal. A year after the CAT scan showed no cancer. Five years into it, Rubin is alive and well. "Compliance," he tells me, "is very important." Rubin freely admits that the regimen is demanding. Taking one-hundred and fifty capsules, preparing

carrot juice three times a day and other tasks keep him and his wife busy. "But", he asks, "what's the alternative?"

THE ROLE OF ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

It has been pointed out by more than one observer that the incidence of cancer in Western society correlates with the refinement of food and the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. The success of physicians like Gonzalez in treating disease by changing what people consume, suggests that dietary and toxic factors are, in fact, related to the development and perpetuation of cancer. As he points out, "everything in our body comes from what we eat. It doesn't come from some miraculous process." Bad food produces suboptimal cells that don't function well.

"No one would think of raising a \$100,000 race horse on junk food, yet we don't think twice about raising people on CoolWhip?. Our diets are a disaster." Not surprisingly, Dr. Gonzalez' patients are put on organic vegetables and whole grains. If meat is on the diet, it must be "free-range", that is, raised naturally and free of hormones/pesticide/antibiotic residues found in ordinary grocery-store meat.



ACID OR ALKALINE

Dr. Gonzalez believes that the physiology of patients with cancer invariably turns up as either too acid or too alkaline. Patients who have too much acidity have a predominance of sympathetic nervous system activity. Those who are too alkaline lean towards parasympathetic activity. The sympathetic nervous system is the part of the brain involved in "fight or flight" activity. This primitive survival mechanism gears up the heart and lungs at the expense of other organs such as the pancreas and stomach. People who are born with a propensity towards sympathetic activity have hyper-vigilant stress responses, but low parasympathetic activity such as digestion.

People who lean towards the parasympathetic are the opposite. Their pancreas, intestines and other organs are working overtime, but their stress response organs are asleep. Dr. Gonzalez' goal with these patients is to augment their sympathetic activity. The idea is to balance sympathetic and parasympathetic physiology.

Continuation of this article "Pancreas Enzymes"

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