

SIDE EFFECTS OF CHEMOTHERAPY

The purpose of this article is to talk about some of the drugs used in the treatment of cancer - and their side effects.

It is important for cancer patients to be aware of these side effects so that they may make informed decisions - often these are not disclosed by their oncologists for obvious reasons.

Ideally, all the chemotherapeutic agents used by oncologists to treat cancer should kill ONLY the cancer cells and NOT the healthy cells.

Unfortunately, this is not the case as their side effects are numerous. All drugs, poisons, radiation and trauma (such as surgery) inevitably damage and debilitate too many normal cells and organs. They undermine and destroy our immunity and our abilities to resist disease, our health and natural healing abilities.

There is no treatment by chemotherapy, radiation, drugs or surgery without side effects. Only too commonly, these side effects are serious, dreadful and debilitating. Most doctors are aware of this side of the story, but prefer not to dwell on it or make it known to patients.

In 1986 McGill Cancer Center scientists surveyed 118 oncologists who specialized in lung cancer. They were asked if they would take chemo if they developed lung cancer. Three-quarters replied that they WOULD NOT TAKE CHEMO. When asked why, they responded that the chemotherapy was not very effective and had many side effects. When asked why they continued to use chemotherapy with their patients they said that this is all they knew, so what else was there to use. From "Reclaiming Our Health" of the by John Robbins, 1996. Published by HJ Kramer, Box 1082, Tiburon, CA 94920.

HAZARDS OF CHEMOTHERAPY

What follows, describes the hazards of individual chemotherapeutic drugs. It offers information that you - the patient - have a right to know - and MUST know! If you do not insist on being told the real facts of chemotherapy, you are putting your life in someone else's hands. You are giving doctors the right to make you more ill (with death as a possibility) - with little chance of restoring your health to any level of well being - except possibly temporarily.

You must - as a patient - be informed. What

5-FLUOROURACIL

Widely used for a long time, especially in the treatment of breast, colon, stomach and other cancers. It is considered to be a fairly mild chemo agent. Its side effects are milder than most other forms of chemo. It is usually used in combination with other chemo drugs in view of adding potency to the combination used because it helps enhance potency without adding too many side effects.

The side effects of 5-Fluorouracil are:

- Nausea and vomiting in most patients (liver congestion and/or damage)
- Diarrhea in most patients. (While these symptoms usually last 3 - 4 days, they are controllable with other drugs.)
- Mouth ulcers, which can be quite painful
- Loss of appetite and desire for food
- Gastric ulcers and bleeding. This can be serious enough to force the stopping of the treatments
- Nails of fingers and toes change in their appearance and coloring
- The majority of patients lose their hair
- The majority of patients develop dermatitis, causing the skin to darken in color. This is an indication of skin toxicity
- Ill health
- Cerebellar Syndrome
- Headaches of the back of the head
- Minor visual disturbances. These brain symptoms are very common and well known. They may go on indefinitely and will not stop after the drug is stopped
- Weakness
- Tiredness
- Loss of sexual desire
- Decrease in menstrual regularity and flow
- Possibility of birth defects in the fetus
- Lowering of the white blood count - comes on about 9 to 14 days after each dose.

NOTE: White blood cells survive in the body only for a period of hours, dividing rapidly. Because of this they also are young, fragile cells, highly susceptible to destruction by chemicals, drugs and toxins. These make white blood cells a prime target for chemotherapy drugs.

White blood cells are extremely essential blood detoxifiers and body protectors. Any time white

treatments you take must be of your choosing - not the choice of a doctor or nurse. It is your life at stake (not the pocketbook of the 'practitioner'). It is your life that has a right to be respected with a certain reverence - and treated according to its needs.

Ironically, virtually all of the chemotherapeutic anti-cancer agents now approved by the Food and Drug Administration for use or testing in human cancer patients are (1) highly or variously toxic at applied dosages; (2) markedly immunosuppressive, that is, destructive of the patient's native resistance to a variety of diseases, including cancer; and (3) usually highly carcinogenic [cancer causing].... These now well established facts have been reported in numerous publications from the National Cancer Institute itself, as well as from throughout the United States and, indeed, the world. Furthermore, what has just been said of the FDA-approved anti-cancer chemotherapeutic drugs is true, though perhaps less conspicuously, of radiological and surgical treatments of human cancer....

If it is true that Orthodox chemotherapy is (1) toxic, (2) immunosuppressant, (3) carcinogenic, and (4) futile, then why would doctors continue to use it? The answer is that they don't know what else to do. Patients usually are not scheduled into chemotherapy unless their condition seems so hopeless that the loss of life appears to be inevitable anyway. Some doctors refer to this stage, not as therapy, but experimentation, which, frankly, is a more honest description.

Another reason for using drugs in the treatment of cancer is that the doctor does not like to tell the patient there is no hope. In his own mind he knows there is none, but he also knows that the patient does not want to hear that and will seek another physician who will continue some kind of treatment, no matter how useless. So he solves the problem by continuing the treatment himself.

ADRIAMYCIN (also called Doxorubicin). This powerful drug is administered by injection directly into the veins. It must be injected carefully and administered with extreme caution. The inside surfaces of the veins can protect themselves against the very toxic effects of this drug. The tissues surrounding blood vessels cannot. They lack the elements to protect themselves.

If even a little of the drug leaks out onto the

blood cell counts drop, patients are more prone to serious infections.

TAMOXIFEN (Tamofen)

This is an estrogen "blocker" commonly used for one of the most common cancers - those of the breast. It is generally combined with and becomes most effective when used with other more powerful cell killers (chemo agents).

The role of Tamoxifen is to inhibit the influence, which estrogens can have on the growth of cells, with the hope of slowing and/or stopping the growth of breast tumors. Hormones, by making certain proteins available and usable by cells, promote their growth. Proteins, together with minerals, make up the skeletal structures of cells.

Tamoxifen has a much greater impact on the growth processes of cells than do the estrogens. Wherever the estrogen seeks to enter into chemical reaction with and support cell multiplication, the more powerful Tamoxifen interposes itself and blocks the estrogen processes.

It prevents the hormones from acting on protein fractions called alanine, aspartame and gamma glutamide. Cell growth is inhibited. By doing so, it does succeed in causing a regression of some breast cancer tumors.

It is more effective in women who are hormone sensitive. Not all women are. However, since it acts directly on cell growth, it has an effect even on cancers of women who are not hormone sensitive.

For the first three to four weeks, it is difficult to determine whether the Tamoxifen is bringing about benefits, or it is being harmful.

The first doses of Tamoxifen build up blood levels of 20 - 30%. Up to 40% of the amounts that penetrate and enter the body are neutralized and detoxified by the liver and biochemical immunity of the body. The activity life of each dose is between 7 - 14 hours. Long term administration and saturation of the body with Tamoxifen prolongs its effectiveness up to 7 days. Up to 70% of this drug is neutralized and eliminated via the intestines.

Whatever benefits Tamoxifen gives to the body, there is a price tag. Like all other chemo agents - the price can be very, very high!

- If the treatment is strong and prolonged,

tissue, serious injury occurs. The patient is liable to develop a large ulcer, which will not heal. The drug reacts with the tissues - and kills their cells. As the cells die, this drug is released. It contacts neighboring cells and tissue and progressively destroys more and more layers. The ulcers grow large and painful. There are cases where the limb had to be amputated because of too much tissue destruction. Sometimes wide excision of tissues by a surgeon, followed by plastic surgery can bypass the need for more serious treatments.

The following are frequent side effects and symptoms of **Adriamycin** activity:

- Loss of some or all of hair
- Extreme nausea and vomiting (= liver toxicity)
- Infections. A lowering of resistance to these is sometimes serious. Even a slight cold can turn into a threat to your life
- Drastic lowering of body immunity/defenses
- Miserable failure of sex life and/or desires
- Disruption of menstrual cycles
- Loss of appetite
- Mouth ulcers
- Damage to the heart. It is permanent; it cannot be reversed. Even if the patient recovers from the treatments, they will have some damage to their heart muscles - enough to force them to curtail and modify their lifestyles. Until now, there has been no successful way discovered of protecting the heart against Adriamycin damage.

There is a maximum lifetime dosage for each patient. Patients stand very realistic chances of dying when that limit is exceeded.

Since treatments are given only once every three or four weeks, the tortures and side effects go on and on and on. Life becomes dismal - in fact a tragedy.

If administered to animals, whose health and resistance to disease are low, it causes cancer! To the offspring of such animals - it causes birth defects!

METHOTEXTRATE (a Lederle product)

SIDE EFFECTS

The side effects of this powerful drug are quite

it can cause cancer of the liver and cysts of the liver

- By blocking the usage of proteins, it undermines the resistance of cells to disease and their self-healing powers
- It can bring on the formation of blood clots (thrombi). Sometimes these break loose and pass through blood vessels until they enter into vessels, which are too small. They block the circulation in these vessels with what is called an embolus. Organs, which need blood from those vessels, will starve, become damaged or die
- The weakening of cell structures tends to affect the eyes more than other organs. Some patients develop cataracts, while others suffer damage to their retina or cornea (lens), vision becomes blurry and declines
- Tumors and cancer of the ovaries and womb
- Decrease of, and destruction of white blood cells and blood platelets
- Blood calcium levels go up, meaning that those amounts of calcium are no longer being used, or they are unusable by the body tissues, thereby the body refuses to absorb them from the blood
- Organs, which need calcium the most become depleted and weakened, in addition to causing weak bones, teeth and nerves. By lowering the resistance of the bones, there is nothing to stop the chemicals that cause the cancer to damage bone cells. These turn into cancer - what are called metastases
- Both blockage of circulation through the liver and lowered levels of protein (which cause the blood to become too thin), cause fluids in the blood to seep out into surrounding tissues. This is called edema
- Other debilities or illnesses already existing anywhere in the body become aggravated
- A lot of the Tamoxifen is discharged through the uterus, damaging the tissues in passing. This will breed uterine cancers, vaginal bleeding and discharge excesses in up to 25% of women
- Skin rashes. The skin is an organ of elimination of toxic minerals. When these are not handled and eliminated normally by liver, kidneys and the lungs, the overload stagnates in the skin pores. This causes serious irritations.

Besides these evidences of damage to organs, some Tamoxifen patients experience a number of

severe: The greater amount of the drug, the worse these are:

- Ulceration - especially of the mouth and throat; common and painful.
- Sharp reduction in the number of white blood cells. Reduction of white blood cells leave patients with . . .
- Lowered immunity.
- Loss of resistance to, and proneness to infections. These infections can be life threatening. Note: White blood cells are one of our bodies many and main infection fighting mechanisms.
- Nausea, vomiting (liver toxicity) usually lasting for days. The greater the dosage of the drug, the more there is of the nausea and vomiting.
- Liver damage. Methotextrate directly attacks the liver - our laboratory of living and the greatest defense against disease and cancer. A biopsy (inserting a needle directly into the liver, and aspirating a small amount of liver tissues) is usually required to determine how severe the damage may be.
- Skin rash and itching - common.
- Skin becomes extremely sensitive to ultra-violet radiation and to the suns rays. A very little exposure causes severe sunburn.
- Loss of hair.
- Decrease in ovary function and upsets of menses; diminished flow or irregularity.

Administered during pregnancy it will kill the baby. If a fetus should survive, the drug will cause major birth deformations.

- *Sperm from a Methotextrate treated male will also cause major birth defects - or
- *The sperm becomes infertile.
- *Kidney damage, cystitis (bladder infection).
- *Headaches.
- *Drowsiness.
- *Blurred vision.
- *Sometimes convulsions (brain damage).
- *Diarrhea - in nearly every patient.
- *Death - if the patient is hypersensitive. (hypersensitivity increases with each new generation in our civilization).

METHODS OF METHOTEXTRATE USE

Very difficult to administer. The chemotherapy of doctor's choice for patients with advanced breast cancer. Used in combination with two

symptoms:

- Nausea and vomiting
- Bruising of the skin
- Reddening of the skin (erythema)
- Bone pain
- Loss of taste for foods and appetite
- Itching of external genitals
- Depression
- Dizziness and lightheadedness
- Headaches
- Hot flashes

I have discussed but a few of the chemo agents used. They and their side effects are typical and their use is based on and supported by medical theory.

Once cancer has been detected in the body, doctors believe that leaving just one single cancer cell intact and alive is enough to trigger cancer cell growth and restart the formation of further tumors. Because of this, doctors claim that it is essential to resort to the use of chemotherapy and/or radiation after tumor eradication - even when no cancer cells can be detected. Their existence is always suspected. The whole body and its trillions of cells is subjected to potent, drastic poisons in order to assure non-recurrence of tumor growths.

Most of us during our lifetime, give growth to - and harbor in our bodies - many cancer cells and the body is able to control and eradicate these with considerable ease - as long as the general immunity, resistance and health of the body are strong. Only with that health the defenses of a healthy body can destroy cancer cells.

There are several sources readily available to you for information on drugs. Amongst the most valuable to you is a book known as the "PDR" - the Physicians Desk Reference, which is available at major book stores around the nation. Its cost is about \$85.00, but well worth it.

Unless you have a medical education, you may have difficulties understanding the words. Most of the terms used will not mean very much to you - unless you use a good medical dictionary. If you are a person that is to be treated by chemo - be prepared! Arm yourself with knowledge so that you can make a good decision as to whether you wish to be subjected to treatments, which could be harmful to your health.

Do not even rely on your doctor, who, regardless of his good intentions, may not have your long-

other drugs - cyclophosphamide and 5-Fluorouracil.

Sometimes used, over several hours, in very high doses that are deadly - in hope of a rapid kill of the tumor. Then an antidote (another drug) to the drug is given in order to neutralize the effects, which could possibly kill the patient.

This chemotherapy has been used for many years and for quite a few different types of tumors. Now it is used little because of its high cost, the time losses and difficulties of preparation and administration (not because of any regard for the patient or the side effects they suffered). The side effects suffered were quite severe in most patients. Many patients refused to tolerate them and discontinued their treatment by this method.

CIS-PLATIN (also known as PLATINOL) Bristol Laboratories, Canada
Cis-Platin is currently (1987) used quite extensively. It is commonly the drug of choice when used in conjunction with other chemotherapy drugs. Everyone who receives Cis-Platin will succumb to some form of sickness. It is not uncommon for it to be a definite cause of death.

The hazards of Cis-Platin are:

- Kidney damage - sometimes just one dose is enough to create this side effect

Treatments are based on administering this drug until the kidneys show damage - but hopefully not enough to threaten life. If the damage is severe and the treatment succeeds in reducing the tumor, you will need to spend time - two or three times a week - in a hospital for the rest of your life, plugged into a kidney machine (dialysis). Large amounts of fluids must be taken to flush out the kidneys in hopes of reducing the damage. The kidney damage does not recede or heal when the drug is stopped. This is the serious hazard that determines the restricting of the use of this drug.

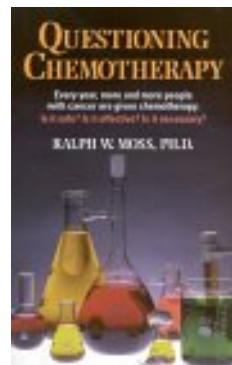
- Deafness; impaired hearing - especially to high frequency sounds. This is a common and normal effect, which you should expect. You may never enjoy listening to a violin again. Understanding normal conversation may also be impaired. Children beware!
- Ringing in the ears
- Extreme nausea or vomiting (Liver

term well being at heart. He may be acting out of desperation, not knowing what else to do. He may be giving you the kinds of treatments he has been taught to use. He may not know that there are other ways, as effective as, and often much more effective than drugs.

I would like to conclude by modifying the quote at the beginning of this book:

Hospitals put many hundreds of millions of dollars each year into the pockets of drug companies. These companies do not intend to lose their profits - regardless of the lives that may be destroyed. One of those lives may be your own!

[Read about the politics of Medicinal Drugs by one of Washington's top journalists](#)



Ralph W. Moss, Ph.D. –
“Conventional cancer therapy is so toxic and dehumanizing that I fear it far more than I fear death from cancer.”

damage).

Note: Nausea and vomiting may also be due to chemo destruction of cells in cells in the stomach and intestines, because these cells also divide very rapidly and are chemo sensitive.

The side effects of this drug are potentially lethal.

Bristol Laboratories later brought out a slightly different form of the drug called Carboplastin. It has less kidney damaging potential. It is also not as effective. The damage to the kidneys could still be serious if doses administered are increased to produce an equal effectiveness. It is also much more expensive than Cis-Platin.