What is the disease progression of cancer (tumor) in Chinese Medicine?

From birth, human beings are nourished by sunshine, clean air, clear water and healthy food. In adapting to changes of climate and environment, and exposure to bacteria and viruses, the growing body fights with pathogens, trying to expel toxins to build a strong immune system. The whole purpose of the inflammatory process and fever is to fight against toxins and prevent them from going deeper inside the body and causing further harm. It is an important part of the process of developing a healthy immune system. When a strong immune system is established, the ability to adapt to the environment is more complete. The body is then less likely to get sick, not to mention being able to avoid the development of masses, sores, carbuncles, and tumors.

Unfortunately, a large percentage of children today are frequently required to take prolonged courses of chemical antibiotics, flu shots, and vaccines. In the long run, this toxin build-up in the body weakens the immune system, and exacerbates allergies. What are allergies? Allergies are the body’s efforts to dispel toxins that are trapped in your body.

When one’s immune system is strong, no allergy symptoms or signs will appear, even though toxins reside in the body. However, when a person catches a cold, stays up late or consumes deep-fried, drying, spicy foods, or certain seafood like fish, cuttlefish or squid, the body will try to purge out the toxins again through the skin, creating rashes in the process. This phenomenon is my definition of what’s an allergic response.

If toxins cannot be purged out through the skin, urination, or defecation, they will accumulate in various parts of the body and become masses, sores, carbuncles, cysts, tumors, or cancer.

Diagnosis is Critical to Appropriate Care

When it comes to treating all kinds of masses (whether sores, carbuncles, cysts, or tumors), it is
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important to understand the constitution of the body and to make an accurate differential diagnosis in each case.

Understanding Disease Progression with Treatment Approaches

The failures and damages caused by incorrect cancer treatments have brought tears and great sorrow to many. If the practitioner does not understand the true cause of the disease, and does not effectively differentiate between cold, heat, deficiency, or excess of the illness, cancer will progress from benign to malignant in the following manner:

1. Early Stage with Redness: At the earliest stage of any swelling or mass (sore, carbuncle, boil, or tumor), redness usually appears. These swellings or masses can be treated by anti-inflammatory and wind expelling approaches. This will allow the toxins to go out through urination and defecation. Employing the sweating approach, allowing the detoxification through skin, will also work. The disease can be successfully treated at this stage.

2. Early Stage with Redness and Swelling (no pus): At the stage when the swelling or mass (sore, carbuncle, boil, or tumor) is already red and swollen, anti-inflammatory and wind expelling approaches can still be applied. As long as pus has not developed, the toxins can still go out through urination, defecation, or sweating.

3. Mid Stage with Pus: Once the swelling or mass (sore, carbuncle, boil, or tumor) shows pus, the anti-inflammatory approach is no longer suitable. Treatment should focus on expelling wind, and promoting the maturation and eruption of pus. (TCM allows and encourages the maturation and development of pus to help drain the pus after it has broken out, to complete the whole cycle of building immunity and expelling toxins. The Western Medicine approach is not to expel the toxins, but rather, to use strong anti-inflammatory medication to reduce inflammation and infection, to keep symptoms at bay. However this approach results in trapping toxins deeper inside the body.)

4. Mid Stage with Pus Head: The swelling must not be drained until it is fully developed. One must wait until the pus head is fully ripe before squeezing or draining it out. When it is ripe, the pus head will become white, which is the root of the disease. When the pus head is not ripe and one squeezes, breaks, or drains the swelling, the wound created will not heal completely. This will result in complications and in lingering of the disease.

5. Last Stage: When the maturation of the mass has not yet completely developed, administering the draining approach will cause lingering of the toxins and the wound not being able to heal and close properly. In addition, if the anti-inflammatory or heat-clearing approach is used at this time, when the toxins are unable to be expelled through urination, defecation, or through the wound opening, the toxins will be trapped in the body and the wound will then become ulcerated and rotten. Heat-clearing herbs and/or anti-
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inflammatory and antibiotic drugs damage Heart and Kidney qi, making the body unable to dispel the toxins, which then makes the swelling turn from benign to malignant.

When a person is young and strong, the body is constantly growing and regenerating. Therefore the body can detoxify and restore itself very quickly. When a person ages or has weak Heart and Kidney functions, the body will not be able to purge out toxins as easily. Thus, the resident toxins damage the Heart and accumulate in the Liver and Kidneys.

Why Do Late Stage Cancer Patients Have Back Pain?
We often see late-stage cancer patients having lower back soreness and pain. This is not because the cancer cells have metastasized to the bone. The lower back is the home of the Kidneys and the Kidney is the source of our vital essence. Kidney yang is our main energy source for fighting disease. However, all the antibiotics and anti-inflammatory medicines damage the Kidney, causing it to be unable to excrete toxins; thus, toxins remain, damages the Kidney, and the back is sore.

Why Do Many Patients Die Soon After Surgery To Remove The Cancer?
Many cancer patients die soon after having surgeries. From my experience, I feel it is not due to the spread of cancerous cells. Everyone knows the dramatic effect a few acupuncture needles can have on the body. Think about the effects of a scalpel! Any surgery takes a major toll on the body. When one’s constitution is still strong, he or she may recover well from surgeries. But imagine how harmful surgery can be on someone who is already weak and has cancer.

Additionally, all the anti-inflammatory drugs given post-surgery further injure the Heart and Kidneys. Kidney and heart failure from the surgery and drugs are the real causes of decline and death, not the spreading of cancerous cells. Even the most vicious cancerous cell cannot compare to the damage of that surgical scalpel. But this is not something that is widely recognized in today’s society.

How Do You Treat Cancer?
Many people often ask me, “Can you give tonics to a patient with cancer or a tumor? Doesn’t the tumor feed on nutrients and grow bigger?”

My 30 years of clinical experience, spent mostly treating cancer patients, tells me that those with weak zheng (upright) qi are the ones most susceptible to cancers or tumors. I employ both detoxification and tonification methods in my clinic. I treat according to the differential diagnosis formulated based on which organ is affected by what pathogenic factor.

In the classics Wan Bing Hui Chun by Yong Ju Pian, “When treating ulcers and masses, one
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should examine the channel relationship, whether the disease is in the exterior or interior, whether the person is deficient or excessive, then decide whether to use attacking methods or augmenting approaches.” For instance,

1. When the condition comes with pain, swelling, fever, thirst, and constipation, it means the evil is in the interior and should be purged.
2. When the condition comes with swelling, burning sensation, pain, chills, fever, and headache, it means the evil is in the exterior and should be dispersed.
3. When the condition comes with strong burning sensation, swelling and pain, it means the evil is in the channels and harmonizing strategy should be employed.
4. When the condition comes with only slight swelling and pain, it means qi and blood deficiency and blood should be tonified and qi lifted.
5. When the condition comes with excessive swelling but no pain or pus, or with pus but not ulcerated, it means severe qi and blood deficiency and should be strongly tonified. (The tonification approach can assist maturation of the mass and draining of the pus.)
6. If the surrounding tissues have a dusky appearance and is slightly swollen and painful; or the ripe pus doesn’t come out, or the rotten flesh does not ulcerate, it means there is cold and deficient yang qi, thus warm tonics should be used.
7. If the condition has not yet turned into an ulcer but heat-clearing and detoxifying herbs were applied, this treatment would damage the spleen and stomach.
8. If the swelling does not mature, but ulcerates, the wound will be hard to heal, and the seven adverse symptoms of masses and ulcers will all come out. When the condition reaches this state, it is often hard to reverse.

Unique Treatment Choices

The Classics state, “All sorts of pain, itchiness, ulcers, and masses are linked to Heart fire. Clinical manifestations include red, swollen lesions, anxiety, fever, constipation, thirst, a rapid and excess pulse, and preference for cold drinks. Even during the coldest time of winter, cold and bitter formulas should be used in order to purge out the heat toxins.”

“Conversely, if the pulse is small, the skin is cold, the patient exhibits diarrhea, borborygmi, poor appetite, vomiting, and cold limbs, warm and pungent formulas should be used to facilitate the yang qi, even during hot summer days.” In the Classics, it also says, “avoid using cold medicine during cold seasons, and avoid using hot medicine during hot seasons,” which are both common sense. Therefore, one should take into consideration the individual patient’s condition and treat accordingly.
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If the masses and ulcers have not broken out, the toxin is still invading the organs. During this time, do not use any hot medicine. In addition, do not use cold medicine if the mass is open and ulcerated, the patient has a poor appetite, and the organs are weakened.

Discerning Stages by Palpation

- When a mass is painful in response to a gentle touch, it means the condition is fairly new and not yet severe. When the masses and ulcers are big, and only hurt upon palpation, it means the disease has already progressed for a long time.
- When pressing an area, if the dent caused by pressing does not come back up after you stop pressing, it means that there is no pus and dispelling method can be applied. If the dent from pressing disappears quickly, it means that there is pus present.
- If the mass is hard upon pressing, it means there is no pus. If it feels semi-soft upon pressing, it means there is pus.
- When touching the area, if the area is not warm, it means that there is no pus. When the area is very warm/hot, it means that there is pus.

If there is no pus but the area is swollen due to qi stagnation, and blood is present in the mass, be extremely careful not to puncture the area. When pus is suspected, drain the pus out right away when the white head forms.

When treating tumors, carefully examine the symptoms and use differential diagnosis as it is the key to success. The failure of many treatments today does not mean that the diseases are incurable. Instead, it is the inappropriate treatments and drugs that cause irreversible problems.

Insights on Treatment Protocols

The treatment protocols to address masses in the various organs are all different and specific. Please refer to my book to consult the sections dealing with liver cancer, lung cancer, cervical cancer, and others, including how they develop, and how to treat them. When understanding channel theory, organ theory, channel pathology and the transition of disease among channels, you will know why and how the cancerous cells metastasize. Here is a brief summary of my clinical findings:

1. Liver Cancer: In TCM the disease is really rooted in the Spleen, Stomach, or Kidney. Do not treat the Liver.
2. Lung Cancer: In TCM the disease is really rooted in Kidney or Liver, not in the Lungs. Do not treat the Lungs.
3. Cervical Cancer, Breast Cancer: These are diseases of the Heart and Liver, not the
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uterus or breasts. Do not treat the breasts or uterus.

4. Uremia: This is a disease of the Heart, not the Kidneys. Do not treat the Kidneys.

In my 30 years of clinical experience treating cancer, I feel that the culprit behind cancer is the extremely toxic environment we live in today. Chemicals from medication overuse, drug abuse, pesticides, environmental toxins, and more, all contribute to why 1 in 4 patients develop cancer in their lifetime.

The ultimate goal in my clinic is to make the patient healthy. In my opinion, looking at cancer cell biopsies, surgeries, chemotherapy, and/or radiation are not going to treat or help the patient. Surgeries are not just ineffective, since cancer cells and toxins are present everywhere in the body and it is not possible to keep removing various parts of the body, but are also harmful to the zheng (upright) qi of the body. Harming the zheng (upright) qi causes further deterioration in the condition of the patient and thus reduces the chances of recovery.

I hold the same opinion about chemotherapy and radiation – they do more harm than good for the patient.

In my practice, I employ an alternating detoxification and tonification approach. Herbs are prescribed to be taken 1 hour prior to every meal, alternating detoxification formulas with tonifying herbs. The concept is to tonify the deficient organs, which are mostly the Heart and the Kidneys (as the Heart needs to be strong enough to pump blood to supply nutrients and take away toxins to be excreted by strong Kidneys).

The detoxification formula depends on which pathogenic factors are affecting the body: wind, cold, heat, damp, summer-heat, dryness, toxic heat or others. I tell my patients to expect a detoxification process through defecation (loose stools), more smelly urination, or manifestation of skin symptoms such as a rash. These are all signs that the body is detoxifying.

About the Author

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I Chun Peng is the #1 TCM cancer specialist in Taiwan. His lecture videos can be found under the speaker section on www.elotus.org. His book Yi Yao 医钥 - The Key to Medicine - Unveiling the Secrets of Chinese Medicine, is now in its 11th print, bringing rich clinical experience to wake up modern medicine and contemporary practitioners. With more than three decades of experience, Dr. Peng wants to pass this knowledge not only to his son, who will continue the family legacy, but to any capable and committed practitioner who wishes to learn.

Yi Yao 医钥 is available in Chinese only. To order, please visit http://www.evherbs.com
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