

Cancer and Herbs

THE PERSON WHO has just been informed that he has cancer is in a critical predicament.* He is presented by his doctor with a choice of one or more of three traditional courses of treatment, yet all of the patient's information points to their questionable efficacy because the statistics for long-term survival for most types of cancer is not promising. What is the person to do? He perhaps has heard of people going to Mexico or elsewhere to get alternative treatment. But if these treatments are effective, why are they not offered domestically? Why indeed?

This article will introduce the reader to three alternative protocols available for the treatment of cancer whose primary elements are herbal. It will also mention several other herbs that are purported to have value in cancer therapy. However, no claim is herein made for their therapeutic merit, nor should any description of a particular modality be construed as a recommendation for its use.

It is, however, of considerable comfort when one knows that he is making his decision based on the comprehension and evaluation of the maximum available information relevant to his concern. The reader may find resources to assist in this determination at the end of the article and in the companion article in the preceding issue of the *Rays*.

First, it is appropriate to review the reasons why one would want to look elsewhere for means to cope with cancer. Of the three methods currently offered for cancer treatment, surgery may be helpful if the lesion is local and accessible. But frequently the procedure is highly traumatizing to the body and mind. Never, in any case, is cancer completely removed by the oncological surgeons, as is routinely claimed ("We got it all.") because cancer is always, from its inception, a systemic disease. Excision of a focus of malignancy is not tantamount to eradication of all malignant cells. Also, the risk of spreading cancer, both in biopsy and surgical removal, is a real possibility and an established fact, not only by releasing cancerous cells from the site of operation, but also through the accelerated cell division incident to



Photo: Hubert J. Steed

Two alkaloids, vincristine and vinblastine, derived from the above-pictured rose periwinkle, are used in treating cancer, particularly, some of the leukemias.

healing the lesion, which may stimulate oncogenesis.

Chemotherapy and radiotherapy are both highly assaultive of the body's health. Neither is cancer specific, are more destructive of healthy than cancerous tissue, and are themselves frequently carcinogenic; that is, cancer causing, by both severely depressing the regenerative powers of the immune system and by stimulating formation and mutation of the oncogene.

In 1954 Dr. Hardin B. Jones, professor of medical physics at the University of California, addressed his colleagues on the efficacy of cancer treatment with conclusions based on statistics which they did not

*This article makes no claims for the merits of the procedures it describes and is provided to enable readers to explore the subject as their interest and discretion dictate.

want to hear: cancer patients have a longer survival rate if they forego all (orthodox) treatment. In un-ephemistic language, the intended cure can hasten death. And the prognosis has not changed because the treatments, and more importantly, the conceptual framework for treating cancer, have not changed. Rather than reinforcing the body's compromised healing powers, current orthodox procedures continue to wage "war" by assaulting the entire body. But since the enemy (guerrillas) live in the same house as the citizens we seek to protect and save, destroying one may destroy the other as well, resulting in the pyrrhic victory that cures the cancer and loses the patient.

Dr. Virginia Livingston has treated thousands of cancer patients using a variety of non-invasive resources, including immune-enhancing vaccines. Her success rate has been far superior to what orthodoxy can achieve. She writes in her book *Cancer: A New Breakthrough*, "Many helpless individuals have been pushed to their graves by the organized, implacable methods of treatment that have been a matter of prejudice rather than the result of enlightened investigation of treatment that is aimed at the support of the patient....indeed, it is a grim picture" (italics added).

What should be emphasized is that there are a number of non-invasive, life-enhancing, non-traditional therapies and substances that are available and have been used to treat cancer for centuries.

In his forward to the book *Sastun: My Apprenticeship with a Maya Healer* (Harper-Collins, 1995) by naturopath Rosita Arvigo, the curator of the New York Botanical Gardens observes that "some 25 percent of all our prescription pharmaceuticals have been discovered" from the one-half to one percent of the planet's 250,000 species of higher plants that have been exhaustively analyzed for their chemical composition and medicinal properties. The Maya healer referred to in

the book's title, Don Elijo, asks plainly, "Why must you poison the body in order to heal it?" So speaks native wisdom. He believes that "for every ailment or difficulty on earth, the Spirits have provided a cure—you just have to find it." So every morning before sunrise, Don Elijo, walks into the jungle and find his curative plants—roots, barks, flowers, leaves.

Two mainstream anticancer drugs, vincristine sulfate and vinblastine sulfate, are based on derivatives of the rose periwinkle, *Catharanthus roseus*. Bark from the Pacific yew tree yields a compound, taxol, which has demonstrated dramatic tumor-dissolving effect in lung, breast, and ovarian cancers. Chaparral, a dark olive green plant native

to the Southwestern United States and Mexico, also known as creosote bush and greasewood, has been used by Native Americans for centuries to treat a variety of illnesses, including cancer. One key ingredient (NDGA) has been shown to possess powerful antitumor properties. Arlin Brown, who runs the Arlin Brown Information Center and publishes the directory *March of Truth on Cancer*, provides a formula for chaparral tea as a cancer

remedy but strongly advises that a person with cancer adopt an intensive program combining detoxification and immune enhancement.

Jason Winters, a former Hollywood stunt man, healed himself of terminal cancer of the neck with a tea made from chaparral, red clover, and an undisclosed Singapore flower. Jason Winter's Herbal Tea is detailed in his book *Killing Cancer* (Vinton Publishing, Mound, MN). Chaparral, however, is condemned on the American Cancer Society's Unproven Methods blacklist.

Pau D'arco, also known as lapacho, ipe roxo, and taheebo, is an herbal tea prepared from the inner bark of the *Tabebuia* tree, native to Brazil and Argentina. Bill Wead, whose 1985 book, *Second Opinion* (Rostrom Communications,



The bark of the Pacific yew (Taxus brevifolia), a small evergreen tree, with its characteristic bright red fleshy seed cup, contains the anticancer compound taxol, which has shown dramatic results, especially cancers of the female organs.

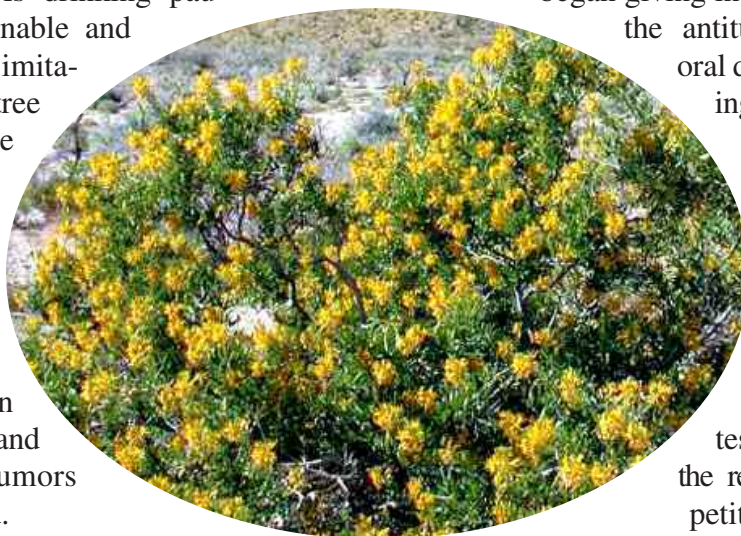
Minden Pictures

Vancouver, 1985), focuses on pau d'arco as a cancer treatment and has on file "hundreds of testimonies as to the efficacy of lapacho," though "there is strong evidence that once remission has occurred, it is necessary to continue drinking the tea." Dr. J.B. Block was involved in an N.C.I.-sponsored study of lapachol (a pau d'arco derivative) and found that it "exhibited antitumor activity...with little toxicity." There was no followup of this promising clinical study.



Red clover, Trifolium pratense, is an ingredient in the Hoxsey herbal tonic, one of three herbs in Jason Winters' tea, and one of the four potentiating herbs for Essiac. Jethro Kloss (Back to Eden) also cites its value in treating cancer.

As enthusiasm intensified for pau d'arco's ability apparently to reverse advanced cancer, including childhood leukemia, so did the orthodox medical community's attempt to stifle interest in it. As drinking pau d'arco became fashionable and big business, cheap imitations using the wrong tree species flooded the marketplace. It is suggested by biochemist Wayne Martin that pau d'arco's value lies in its ability to inhibit the formation of *fibrin*, the protein coating that surrounds and protects malignant tumors from being recognized.



The creosote bush, also known as chaparral, Larrea tridentata, is a desert shrub that smells like balsam. It is used in the Winters' herbal formula for cancer, is used as a douche by Dr. Andrew Weil for the pre-cancerous condition, cervical dysplasia. Chaparral extract kills cancer cells in test tubes, according to recent studies at Auburn University by E. Mora.

Three of the most established alternative herbal therapies are Essiac, Hoxsey, and Iscador. Essiac was first used by surgical nurse René Caisse (Essiac spelled backwards) in Canada, beginning in the 1920's after she saw

on her mother's sister who had cancer of the stomach with liver involvement and a prognosis of six months to live. She recovered and lived for another 21 years.

Essiac is a combination of sheep's sorrel, which nurse Caisse surmised was the primary antitumor herb, and three other herbs which work as blood purifiers—turkey rhubarb, burdock root, and slippery elm bark. The four Essiac herbs may be taken with four potentiating herbs: watercress, blessed thistle, red clover, and kelp. The true healing power of these herbs is derived from their synergistic effect, their

complementary, enhancing interaction. Caisse began giving intramuscular injections of the antitumoral component and oral doses of the blood purifying fraction with quicker results.

By 1926 nine licensed Canadian physicians petitioned Canada's Department of Health and Welfare to allow Caisse to conduct large-scale tests of Essiac, after seeing the results of her work. The petition backfired. "It became," writes chiropractor and author Gary Glum in his book on Caisse's life and her use of Essiac (*Calling of an Angel*, Silent Walker Publishing, Los Angeles, 1988), "the opening gun in

its dramatic effect the war on Essiac." For the next fifteen years she

Photo: Elisa Sanger

Desert Star Images

lived under siege. She treated hundreds of patients a month while doctors and officials who wanted her arrested fought against her supporters.

Nurse Caisse found that her remedy had an “affinity for drawing all the cancer cells, which had spread, back to the original site, at which point the tumor would first harden, then later it would soften, until it vanished altogether, or more realistically, the tumor would decrease in size to where it could then be surgically removed with minimal complications.”

Dr. Charles Brusch, co-founder of the Brusch Medical Center, one of the largest clinics in Massachusetts, and for many years a personal physician of John Kennedy, has personally taken Essiac for his cancer and has “every faith in it.” Without a doubt, he says, “Essiac has been found to at least prolong life.” Competing versions of Essiac are on the market and one would do well to thoroughly research the issue before proceeding further. Dr. Glum also makes the herbal preparation and provides detailed directions for taking it.

The Hoxsey therapy, mentioned briefly in the preceding *Rays* article on cancer (Nov/Dec '96), works to normalize the constitution of body fluids and restore the body's original chemical balance so that its environment will be unfavorable to the survival and reproduction of cancer cells. The Hoxsey Tonic is designed to accomplish this restoration. It combines potassium iodide with some or all of the following: licorice root, red clover, burdock root, stillingia root, barberis root, poke root, cascara, Aromatic USP 14, prickly ash bark and buckthorn bark. As Hoxsey writes in his book *You Don't Have to Die*, “In our laboratories we are able to demonstrate that the blood chemistry of patients does undergo definite changes as the result of this medicine.” Several pastes known as escharotics are applied locally in external cases.

They “halt the spread of the disease and speed the *necrosis* (death) of cancer cells.”

Two federal courts in the 1950's upheld the “therapeutic value” of Hoxsey's internal tonic. Even his archenemies, the A.M.A. and the F.D.A., admitted that his treatment could cure some forms of cancer.

Hoxsey was arrested more times than any person in medical history, usually for practicing medicine without a license. But no cancer patient ever testified against him. In 1954 an

independent team of ten physicians

from around the United States

made a two-day inspection of

Hoxsey's Dallas clinic and

declared that it was “suc-

cessfully treating patho-

logically proven cases of

cancer....We as a committee

feel that the Hoxsey treat-

ment is superior to such con-

ventional methods of treat-

ment as X-ray, radium, and

surgery. We are willing to assist

this clinic in any way possible in

bringing this treatment to the

American public.” But the treat-

ment was and continues to be

denied to the American public.

It is on the American Cancer Society's blacklist of

“Unproven Methods of Cancer

Management,” though the 1953 Fitzgerald Report, commissioned by a U. S. Senate committee, concluded that organized medicine (the A.M.A., enlisting the support of N.C.I. and the F.D.A.) had “conspired” to “suppress” a fair, unbiased assessment of Hoxsey's methods.

Since 1963 the Hoxsey therapy (“a combination of three elements— internal medicine, external compounds and supportive treatment,” including a dietary regimen and vitamin therapy) has been operating out of Tijuana, Mexico as the Bio-Medical Center, under the able administration of Hoxsey's long-time chief nurse, Mildred Nelson, herself a scoffer of the therapy until her mother was cured of metastasized cancer.



Burdock root, arctium lappa, common to both the Essiac and Hoxsey herbal therapies for cancer, contains a substance, called “the B-factor,” which reduces cell mutation, and inulin, a powerful immune modulator.

Photo: David Thierry

From an esoteric standpoint, the Iscador therapy, offered by the Lukas Klinik in Arlesheim, Switzerland, may be most interesting. An extract of the European mistletoe, Iscador was proposed as a cancer remedy by Rudolf Steiner, the founder of the Anthroposophical movement. Steiner characterized cancer as the result of the weakening of formative forces which create structure and find expression in the immune system, allowing cellular forces, which regulate cell division and growth, to gain the upper hand and cause cell proliferation. When formative forces weaken and lose their ability to keep cells performing their specialized functions, the cells become autonomous and “selfish.” As Anthroposophical physician Friedrich Lorenz explains, “the cancer cell falls back into its own individual life—no longer puts itself into the services of a higher organ or organism—it becomes egotistic.” In fact, Steiner has described cancer as the manifestation of willing that is not imbued with life-filled thoughts or true feelings, whereupon it becomes a destructive force.

Mistletoe is an “animal plant,” a survivor of the Moon Period of evolution. It has an “insane aristocracy,” the tendency to do everything by its own rhythms. Dr. Rita Leroi, for many years the supervisor of the Lukas Klinik, says that “the mistletoe conquers the tumorous tendency with its own rhythmically built-up formation.” Iscador is a fermented extract of the whole mistletoe plant. Iscador M, made from mistletoe grown on apple trees, is used to treat women, and Iscador P, grown on pine trees, is for men and women. Different preparations are chosen according to the patient’s gender and the location of the primary tumor. Iscador is given as part of a program encompassing diet, herbs, and therapies that use art, music, and movement, notably eurythmy.

In Anthroposophical medicine cancer is not so much a tragedy as an opportunity to undergo inner spiritual change and find new direction. Patients are encouraged to see the cancer not as punishment but as a springboard for a change of heart and mind. □

Resources

For all publications cited in this article and an extensive book list on most facets of the cancer phenomenon contact Cancer Book House, **Cancer Control Society** 2043 N. Berendo St., Los Angeles, CA 90027. Phone: 213-663-7801



Newweek Books: Health Plants of the World

*Mistletoe, **Viscum album**, sacred to the Druids, is a semiparasitic plant from which the cancer remedy Iscador is obtained. It enhances immune system activities, stimulates the thymus, enhances phagocytosis, elevates the number of immunocompetent white cells, and activates natural killer cells.*

Additional clearinghouses for information regarding alternative cancer therapies and patients who have recovered from these therapies include:

Arlin J. Brown Information Center, P.O. Box 251, Fort Belvoir, VA 22060. Phone: 703-451-8638

The Alliance for Alternative Medicine, P.O. Box 59, Lake Liberty, WA 99019. Phone: 509-255-9246

Foundation for Advancement in Cancer Therapy, P.O. Box 1242, Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10113. Phone: 212-741-2790

International Association for Cancer Victors and Friends, 7740 West Manchester Ave., Suite 110, Playa del Rey, CA 90293. Phone: 310-822-5032

People Against Cancer, P.O. Box 10, Otho, IA 50569. Phone: 515-972-4444

Essiac: **ESSIAC International**, Suite 2211, 1081 Ambleside Dr., Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K2B 8C8. Phone: 613-820-9311; Elaine Alexander; 6690 Oak St., Vancouver, British Columbia, V6P 3Z2, Canada. Phone: 604-261-1270; Dr. Gary Glum, P.O. Box 80098, Los Angeles, CA 90080. Phone: 213-271-9931

Hoxsey: **Bio-Medical Center**, P.O. Box 727, General Ferreira #615, Col. Juarez, Tijuana, B.C., Mexico. Phone: 011-52-66-849011/849132 Evenings

Iscador: **Lukas Klinik**, CH-4144 Arlesheim, Switzerland. Phone: 011 41 61-701-3333; **Physicians Association for Anthroposophic Medicine**, P.O. Box 269, Kimberton, PA 19442

Pau D'arco: through a catalogue from Lindberg Nutrition, Torrance, CA. Phone: 800-338-797

Jason Winters products: **Tri-Sun North America**, 109 1/2 Broadway, Box 1606, Fargo, ND 58107. Phone: 800-447-0235