

Philippines HEALTH & WELLNESS Travel

SPECIAL ISSUE ON CANCER AWARENESS

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Coming to grips with the "Big C"

By Joyce Socao-Alumano

U.S. Poet Laureate Donald Hall wrote an entire book of poems, titled "Without", about his experience taking care of his wife, the poet Jane Kenyon, as she was dying of leukemia. Many of the poems are untitled, and one of them goes:

"Dying is simple/she said./What's the worst is... the separation/When she no longer spoke/they lay alone together, touching/and she fixed on him/her beautiful enormous round brown eyes, shining, unblinking, and passionate with love and dread."

The words written by Hall have a very personal significance to me now—I never imagined, in the course of publishing this issue of our special supplement, that I would experience the challenge and emotional roller coaster faced by those who care for a loved one with cancer—my father was diagnosed with non-small cell lung cancer.

And so, this issue became a personal journey for me, as well, and the interviews and research done for this article was no longer just for the benefit of our readers but also a source of hope and comfort: after all, acquiring knowledge about a serious (or even terminal) illness lets us feel a measure of control over it, even though such knowledge does not always result in a cure; it can be a tool for coping with the emotional, psychological, and physical difficulties that go with the experience. —Ed.

FACING CANCER

Lung cancer is one of the most difficult cancers to treat. This is because it's a type of cancer that spreads to other organs of the body—a process known as "metastasis". According to Dr. Guia Elena Ladrera, an

oncologist at the Lung Center of the Philippines, our lungs are very vascular (having a lot of blood vessels) organs because they act to take in oxygen and put this oxygen in our blood.

This blood passes through the lungs' blood vessels, where they get oxygen, and then pro-

ceed to bring this oxygen to all the other parts of the body. Unfortunately, in the case of lung cancer, cancer cells are also able to travel through the lungs' network of blood vessels and spread to the other organs.

According to Dr. Ladrera, cancer cells begin as normal

cells in our body. However, when exposed to substances called carcinogens, they genetically mutate to become abnormal cells. These abnormal cells multiply and grow, creating more and more cancer cells in the body. Such cancer cells compete with regular cells in absorbing the body's nutrients. As more cancer cells multiply, more normal cells are killed. Eventually, the organ or organs attacked by the cancer fails and shuts down.

Several factors are present in the formation of cancer. Carcinogens, of course, are usually blamed as the culprits, but immunity and genetics also play their part.

Dr. Ladrera said that a strong immune system can protect against cancer. This is because immune system cells attack and destroy cancer cells to keep them from growing and destroying a person's health. However, the immune system is not always able to do this. When the immune system fails to detect cancer cells, the latter are able to grow and multiply.

Right now, the type of cancer which is a cause for concern in the Philippines is breast cancer—and October has been declared Cancer Awareness Month by the Philippines' Department of Health (DOH).

Top 10 Leading New Cancer Cases in 2010 in the Philippines (Both Sexes)

Cancer Sites	Number
1. Breast	12,262
2. Lung	11,458
3. Liver	7,331
4. Colon/Rectum	5,787
5. Cervix Uteri	4,812
6. Leukemia	3,153
7. Stomach	3,129
8. Prostate	2,712
9. Brain/Nervous System	2,236
10. Ovary	2,165

SOURCE: DOH - (GLOBOCAN 2008)

Top 10 Leading New Cancer Deaths in 2010 in the Philippines (Both Sexes)

Cancer Sites	Number
1. Lung	9,184
2. Liver	6,819
3. Breast	4,371
4. Colon/Rectum	3,060
5. Leukemia	2,609
6. Stomach	2,274
7. Cervix Uteri	1,984
8. Brain/Nervous System	1,855
9. Prostate	1,410
10. Other Pharynx	1,326

SOURCE: DOH - (GLOBOCAN 2008)

Example of Conventional and Integrative Medicine Prescription for Lung Cancer Treatment

CONVENTIONAL DRUGS	INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE
Docetaxel	Pu Pu Tea
Amrubicin	Liquid Chiropractic
Mitomycin	Acupuncture
Platinol	Herbal
Etoposide	Grassroots
Metastasis	Lactation
Ferrous Sulfate	Paracetamol
Hydrocortisone	Zingiber
Metformin	Cu Pu Pu Tea
Enalapril (Lipitor)	Ginger-Blood

COMING/ G2



CARTOON: COURTESY OF JAYSON DELA CRUZ

Treating cancer requires boosting the immune system and this is achieved not only by medical means.

These intangible immunity boosters are received by patients under the care of Filipino doctors and medical professionals who are known the world over for their compassion, cheerfulness, and kindness towards their patients. Photo shows the author's father and mother with their caring and competent doctors. From left: Dr. Ernesto Que, Dr. Rene Tuazon, Dr. Benito Purugganan, Dr. Luz Kwong, Dr. Dante Dator, Dr. Joselito Chavez, Dr. Mike Ramos, Dr. Romina Danguilan, Dr. Ferdinand Morabe, and Dr. Beatrice Tiangco.

Breast Strokes

At the MediCard Lifestyle Center

Breast cancer remains a formidable disease. Despite advances in health care and greater awareness, the Department of Health reports that breast cancer is now the most common cancer in the Philippines, taking at least 16% of the 50,000 cases diagnosed with cancer. The Philippine Breast Cancer Network also reveals that the Philippines now has the highest incidence rate of breast cancer in Asia. Globally, the Philippines ranks ninth in incidence rates of breast cancer.

Fortunately, there are ways to fight breast cancer. Doctors strongly advocate early detection as the best way to keep breast cancer at bay. In particular, physicians urge women to conduct a monthly self-breast exam so they can feel for any lumps or irregularities and observe their breasts in the mirror. "Immediately seek consult when you notice something wrong so the doctor can observe and formulate the best course of action," says Dr. Kaiserin Santos-Lipana, one of three breast surgeons at the MediCard Lifestyle Center Breast Clinic.

An outpatient facility, the MediCard Lifestyle Center Breast Clinic offers a convenient way for women to have their breasts checked and treated. At the clinic, patients can consult with breast specialists and undergo the necessary diagnostic and therapeutic procedures all under one roof. It's a one-stop shop where everything is done on an outpatient basis and

not in a hospital setting, which sometimes scares patients.

Aside from offering quality healthcare, the MediCard Lifestyle Center Breast Clinic is one of the very few local health facilities offering a mammotome procedure, which is available in three other hospitals in Manila. "The mammotome is a vacuum-assisted biopsy which, through a small cut, allows us to completely remove a whole mass without subjecting the patient to open surgery," says Dr. Aldine Astrid Basa. It is an outpatient procedure so there's no downtime.

Explaining the risk factors for breast cancer, Dr. Basa points to age. "Risk increases as we age. If you have a family history of breast cancer, it doesn't necessarily mean you'll get it because 90% of breast cancer is not hereditary," says Dr. Basa. Other factors to watch out for include the following: if you've had previous cancer in the breast, uterus or ovaries; if you menstruated early (before 12 years old) or become menopausal late (after 50 years old); if you've never had a child; if you've never breastfed and if you're taking oral contraceptive pills or hormonal replacement therapy continuously for two or more years.

Unfortunately, all women are at risk for breast cancer. "Regardless of whether you have a family history or not, all women, by the mere fact that we have breasts, are prone to get breast

cancer.

So all women should be aware of their breasts, examine them, see a doctor at least once a year and when you reach age 40, have a mammogram and ultrasound," adds Dr. Basa, who stresses the importance of undergoing both procedures.

A lot of patients say they'll choose an ultrasound over a mammogram because it is less painful but we do not recommend that because what is seen by the mammogram cannot be seen by ultrasound and vice versa. So one cannot replace the other. They are complementary," says Dr. Basa.

A mammogram is a like an x-ray of the breast. The breast is compressed in two ways, horizontally and vertically, and doctors then get an image. Based on this, doctors can see whether there are suspicious microcalcifications in the breast, which can be the very first sign of breast cancer. On the other hand, the ultrasound detects a lump in the breast and can give us an idea if the lump is benign or malignant. At the end of the day, doctors say winning the war against breast cancer comes down to early detection. Women are advised to undergo a mammogram and ultrasound every year once they reach 40 years old.

"Minimal treatment is what we want and obviously survival is ensured if we detect cancer early. But the moment we



Two of the three Breast Clinic Surgeons at The MediCard Lifestyle Center: Dr. Kaiserin Santos-Lipana and Dr. Aldine Basa

get it late, we cannot guarantee survival. Patients have to go through the whole treatment, including surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy, hormonal therapy and sometimes targeted therapy which costs a lot. So in order to survive breast cancer we need to detect it early," says Dr. Basa.

To know more about breast cancer and how to properly maintain the health of your breasts, visit the MediCard Lifestyle Center Breast Clinic at No. 51 Paseo de Roxas corner Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue in Makati City. Clinic hours are Mondays, Fridays and Saturdays 10:30am - 12:30 pm (Dr. Kaiserin Santos-Lipana), Wednesdays, 10 am - 12 noon (Dr. Aldine Basa) and Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 am - 12 noon (Dr. Joy Jerusalem).

BREAST ULTRASOUND AND MAMMOGRAM FOR ONLY P750

To help today's women fight breast cancer, MediCard is offering a breast ultrasound and mammogram for only P750 avail-

able until October 31 at the MediCard Lifestyle Center in Makati.

To avail, call 894-5720 or visit the MediCard Lifestyle Center at No. 51 Paseo de Roxas corner Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City.

TRANSCENDING BOUNDARIES

In observance of the breast cancer awareness month, MediCard and Friends Under the Tree present, "Transcending Boundaries" a week long exhibit showing breast paintings of real women by artist Segui Cu Unjieng.

The exhibit will run from October 22-27 at the lobby of the MediCard Lifestyle Center.

Proceeds of this event will go to "Ating Dibibin" breast cancer screening program under the "I Can Serve Foundation" and will benefit women who have no financial means to have the necessary test for early breast cancer prevention.



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Coming to grips with the 'Big C'

From page G1

Although medicines and treatments for this disease have advanced to the point where the patient's chances for survival have significantly increased, it is still a serious, potentially fatal illness. Breast cancer affects Filipino females and Filipino males as well, although the number of male patients is less by comparison.

According to the DOH, breast cancer remains the number one cause of cancer death among women. Also, the leading cancer site in the Philippines is still the breast, occurring more often at that site compared to the lungs. As of 2010, it is estimated that three out of 100 Filipinos are at risk of getting cancer. One out of every 100 Filipinas die from breast cancer before age 75.

Fortunately, early detection of breast cancer greatly increases a patient's chances for survival and recovery.

STANDARD TREATMENT

In the Philippines, oncologists follow the standard treatment for cancer as determined by Western medical science. This standard treatment includes surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation therapy. The success of this treatment depends on several factors: a) A person's state of health and resilience; b) The stage of cancer when it is detected and treated; and c) The type of cancer tumor involved (there are several types) and how susceptible it is to the treatment.

Usually, a person's age is not a major contributor on success for cancer treatment. For example, there could be a strong 80-year-old patient and another patient, who is a bedridden 30-year-old. Between the two of them, it's the 80-year-old patient who is better able to withstand the effects of cancer treatment—and may also have a greater chance of recovery.

In general, the healthier and stronger a person's body is, the greater chances he or she has to recover from cancer. Younger patients also have a greater chance of recovery compared to older patients. This is because a strong, healthy body not only helps fight off cancer cells but also helps a person recover faster from surgery, and cope with the debilitating side effects of chemotherapy and radiation therapy.

In my father's case, we face bigger challenges. For one thing, he's already in his 60s. He's also not in the best of health ever since he suffered from a stroke eight years ago. In fact, he could only take in food through a tube in his stomach. Stem cell was also no longer a practical treatment.

With all these considerations in mind, the family opted for a milder type of chemotherapy for my dad. Surgery was out of the question, as his body would not be able to take the physical trauma involved. Radiation therapy, in our view, could do more harm than good. So the option we took was to give him, along with the supportive and symptomatic treatments, a milder form of chemotherapy pill as his medication.

While chemo pill's side effects are "milder" in comparison to other chemotherapies, the side effects are still uncomfortable, to say the least, especially for my dad, who has to put up with itchy skin rashes on top of his breathing difficulties and other symptoms.

The doctors told us that the chemo pill would not result in an actual cure for my father. At most, what it could do is control the tumor in his lung, so that it does not get bigger—but that's something no doctor could guarantee either. Faced with all these, we thought that with so many health challenges stacked against my dad, it was better to start focusing on his quality of life. If it was indeed just a matter of time before the cancer takes him, then we wanted to look for alternative treatments that would at least improve his quality of life, if not actually save it.

TOMOTHERAPY

While exploring options for my father's treatment, we also discovered that the Makati Medical Center has added a new procedure called TomoTherapy. Essentially, this treatment is a revolutionary form of radiation therapy for cancer.

The usual radiation therapy tends to harm more of the healthy tissue around the tumor or cancer sites because the dose of radiation is aimed in a less precise manner.

Using TomoTherapy, however, a doctor can correctly identify and locate tumor sites and the tumors with great accuracy. By using a high-tech system that combines integrated computer tomography (CT) with advanced software, it sends a precisely aimed, image-guided beam of radiation to cancerous tumors. This lessens the exposure of healthy tissue to the radiation.

Most importantly, TomoTherapy reduces many of the common side effects that occur with radiation treatment. "Very often, a tumor as well as normal organs shift from their original location due to many factors including weight loss which alters a patient's anatomy, or as a consequence of the actual treatment itself. This may result in under or over dosage during treatment if these movements are not accounted for," explained Dr. Kathleen Baldivia, Radiation Oncology Section Head at MakatiMed.

Using TomoTherapy, Makati Medical Center oncologists can adjust the patient's treatment plan to account for changes in tumor volume and anatomy during the course of treatment. The prescribed radiation dose distribution can also be monitored and maintained according to these changes.

INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE

With the Philippine as a rich source of alternative therapies, we wanted to choose the therapies that did not contradict good sense or medical science. We decided to consult with two alternative medicine doctors, Dr. Sam Dizon of Nurture Spa

The TomoTherapy in Makati Medical Center is a technology that precisely aims for the cancer tumor



Nutrition has a big role in preventing or recovering from cancer. Evidence-based researches prove that fruits, vegetables, complex carbohydrates and deep sea-fish, all have the necessary nutrients, fiber and other substances that can help the recovery of the body from the disease—and may also prevent cancer from occurring

and Dr. Mikey Vergara of The Farm of San Benito. Both of them are medical doctors in Western medicine but they both decided to add alternative therapies to their medical practice.

"What we need more in the Philippines is not really alternative medicine but 'integrative medicine'. This means that while we accept Western medical science, we also do not turn our backs on other systems of medicine—like Oriental medicine from China, for example. We should not dismiss such medical knowledge outright because they also have a track record of being effective," explained Dr. Vergara.

"Alternative modalities from the East came as a result of observation and tradition. What I use are modalities that not only have good traditional use—thousands of years to be exact—but have scientific reasons for how they work, and are duplicable and safe. That way, we can defend our protocol even with the most vehement critics. And as Hippocrates said, 'Do no harm', said Dr. Dizon.

"At the same time, there are therapies in other medical systems that make sense and have a track record of being effective. This is why it's important for Western trained doctors to learn what other schools of medicine have to contribute. For example, the effectiveness of acupuncture is now recognized in the West."

Both Dr. Dizon and Dr. Vergara are examples of such doctors who are more open-minded. They recognize that Oriental Medicine from China, Ayurvedic medicine from India, and other non-Western medical knowledge deserve our attention and can be effective as well.

"What we refer to as 'alternative' medicine works from a different paradigm compared to Western medicine. The Western approach is that, if you get sick, you are given a pill to cure your illness. That's it."

"Most alternative treatments that approach health and healing through traditional and natural mean benefit the patient in this way: by allowing him or her heal from within. This healing from within happens in two ways. First, by strengthening their immune systems; and second, through the restoration of optimum body processes and activities.

"Such an approach helps your body get stronger, get cured from within. It's more than just giving a cure. It's all about being healthy and enabling your body to protect itself against illness and curing itself when it gets sick."

"That said, we should point out that alternative therapies take time. When someone has a serious infection, or is in need of surgery, Western medicine is very effective for that. When it comes to acute, especially emergency cases, Western medicine is very good. Its view of the human body is from a technician's perspective. If a body part goes wrong, we do surgery or we replace it," explained Dr. Vergara.

In my father's case, we decided to spare him from the side effects of the chemo pill by giving him alternative medicines. Dr. Sam Dizon prescribed counterparts of the medications that my father was taking for his condition. Dr. Dizon didn't forbid our use of chemo pill, but he said that the alternative medications he prescribed could be used to support my father's health and help him deal with the side effects of the chemotherapy.

COMBINING STRENGTHS

Former Health Secretary Jimmy Galvez-Tan, who is a medical doctor as well as an integrative medicine practitioner also shared some of his insights about cancer. He pointed out that cancer is a disease with many contributing factors—there is never just one single cause.

And since prevention is always preferable to seeking a cure once the disease takes hold, Dr. Galvez-Tan gave a few suggestions on how we can prevent cancer from occurring.

"Since cancer is a multi-factorial disease, prevention can be done in multiple ways. A strong human immune system plays a huge role in the prevention of or recovery from cancer. The immune system keeps the body from developing diseases and protects it from harmful organisms."

"Our immune system can be strengthened by many non-pharmacologic means and evidence-based methods. Increasing or strengthening of the immunity can be done by: a) Sleeping for at least 8 hours or more in full darkness; b) Exercise of at least 30 minutes to one hour per day; and c) Freedom from psychosocial or emotional stressors or proper management of them."

"Furthermore, being able to express love, having doses of laughter, leisure and positive outlook in life, or meditation, etc., are non-pharmacologic ways to increase immunity," he said.

Dr. Galvez-Tan also pointed out that nutrition plays an important part in strengthening our bodies to help prevent cancer.

"Nutrition has a big role in preventing or recovering from cancer. Evidence-based researches prove that fruits, vegetables, complex carbohydrates and deep sea-fish, all have the necessary nutrients, fiber and other substances that can help the recovery of the body from the disease—and may also prevent cancer from occurring."

For Dr. Galvez-Tan, both Western and non-Western medicine have much to contribute to each other's efforts to treat cancer and other diseases. According to him each medical system has its own positive strengths, and when these are combined, they can produce a synergy of effect that is beneficial to the patient.

"Western medicine has provided great breakthroughs in the medical field especially in the diagnostic procedures, surgery and cure of certain diseases. It has also provided deeper understanding of the conditions and treatment modalities. It relies mainly and strictly to mechanized diagnostic procedures, laboratory tests and synthetic pharmacologic methods."

While Western medicine focuses more on the biomedical aspect of disease, alternative medicine, on the other hand, has a holistic approach in the human health and wellness. It targets the spiritual, environmental, and psychosocial and emotional aspects of the person and mainly concerns on maintaining quality of life, promotion of health and wellness," he explained.

This integration of Western and non-Western medicine is not a new thing, according to Dr. Galvez-Tan. He noted that the division between "Western" and "non-Western" medicine is simply a product of perceptions and attitudes.

"Many countries like China, Korea, Germany, Netherlands, among others, have combined the Western and alternative medicine, and have been

applying Integrative Medicine in their practice. The World Health Organization (WHO) has advocated the integration of traditional medicine into conventional medicine and primary health care since the Alma Ata Declaration of 1978," he said.

MAKING THE CHOICE

After a few days of administering these alternative medications to our dad, we noticed that the color was coming back in his cheeks and that his bowel movement has become more regular. He also didn't have the skin rashes anymore. There were no guarantees, of course that the alternative medicine would cure him but we have seen that our dad was much more comfortable.

My dad's case is an extreme one—his prognosis was never really good to begin with. The Western-trained doctors who looked at him were not giving us false hopes. Our decision to go for an integrative medicine approach, combining Western and non-Western medicine, is one that is meant to provide him with quality of life, not a cure. And we have seen that he felt much better.

That's the best we can hope for right now, short of a miracle. Still, I am sharing this story because I have learned that in cases of end-stage cancer, there are still many mysteries, many challenges that we face, despite the remarkable advances in Western medicine.

After my experience working with doctors who treated my father, I realized that we are very fortunate that we live in the Philippines; in the Philippines, we have advanced Western medical knowledge and the latest equipment, medication, and protocols for treating cancer—and all these are combined with the friendly, competent, and compassionate care that our medical professionals, from medical and laboratory technicians to nurses, to cancer specialists, extend to patients.

Words are not enough to express the high-level of care and support that my father and my entire family have received from our Filipino doctors and medical professionals—on the part of these experts in Western and Integrative medicine.

Our experts in Integrative medicine also offer very effective advice in healing the body from within. They are able to combine Alternative medicine with Western medical knowledge in order to prescribe dietary regimens; safe, alternative medicines; and give advice on lifestyle changes—all meant to let the body get rid of toxins, boost its immunity, and strengthen its ability to fight cancer and other illnesses, using the body's own natural defenses.

As was mentioned earlier, treating cancer requires boosting the immune system, and this is achieved not only by medical means. Feeling loved, being able to laugh, to be cheerful, and to feel hope—all these contribute to a patient's recovery and healing from cancer. These intangible immunity boosters are received by patients under the care of Filipino doctors and medical professionals, who are known the world over for their compassion, cheerfulness, and kindness towards their patients.

Even a beautiful, relaxing setting helps boost the immune system of a cancer patient and the Philippines is rich in serene natural settings of breath-taking beauty, from beaches to rolling hills and verdant landscapes. For patients from overseas, Filipinos' friendly and hospitable nature, as well as their being conversant in English, will be a boon when they travel in urban areas and tourism destinations in our tropical islands.

My faith in the Philippines as an ideal destination for patients—whether struggling with cancer or other illnesses—from overseas, both foreigners and those of Filipino descent, has been confirmed and rewarded.

Ultimately, the choice falls on the patient and his or her loved ones when it comes to the various options for cancer treatment. They can choose to go for the Western protocol for cancer treatment or they may choose alternative, non-Western therapies. In my father's case, we have so far chosen to integrate both the Western and non-Western modalities, with guidance from experts in these fields.

I also realized that integrative medicine should be an area that everyone concerned with health and wellness should learn about. Truly, the quest for health and wellness is something that one does for a lifetime—not just for oneself but to benefit others, as well.

Acknowledgement:

Dr. Jaime Galvez-Tan, Clinicng Bayan
Dr. Sam Dizon, Nurture Spa
Dr. Mikey Vergara, The Farm of San Benito
Dr. Guia Elena Ladrera, Lung Center of the Philippines





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Treating cancer: A natural, holistic approach

The Farm at San Benito in Lipa City, Batangas, Philippines is an integrated medical and wellness facility that follows the principles of natural, holistic healing. It is renowned for its therapies which are based on detoxification, nutrition therapy, and natural means of enabling the body to use its own, inherent resources to heal itself. Below are some information to explain the facility's approach to cancer treatment:

1. What is The Farm's understanding of cancer as a disease - and how does this understanding/perspective shape its approach to treating cancer?

Cancer is a systemic condition. If you have breast cancer it doesn't mean it only affects the breasts. Or in the case of colon cancer, it doesn't mean it only affects the digestive system. Our approach therefore has to be systemic too. We not only treat the physical but we heal the psycho-emotional and spiritual aspect of the person.

2. What are the steps involved in helping a client achieve healing from cancer?

First thing is to make sure we clean out the organs of elimination: that means the kidneys, liver, digestive system, and the lymphatics. Then we strengthen the immune system and restore the body's metabolic state to be able to fight the cancer by itself. So the idea here is to let the body take control and repair itself, to heal itself.

3. At what stage/s is cancer still treatable through natural means?

All cancers, at all stages are still treatable. Of course at higher stages it will be more difficult.

4. In your opinion, what role does the human immune system play in the prevention of, or in a patient's recovery from, cancer?

It is very vital. Many people don't understand that the immune system is a multi-organ system too. It is not just your white blood cells but all the organs that contribute to the immune system's capability to fight infections or cancers. These organs are the lymphatics, small and large intestine, liver, spleen, bone marrow, thyroid, thymus, adrenals, and brain. So there's this branch of medicine called the neuro-immuno-endocrine system.

5. What role does nutrition play in preventing or recovering from cancer?

Nutrition is one of the pillars of cancer therapy, the others being detoxification and repair of organ systems.

6. Does your holistic approach allow a cancer patient to still undergo conventional Western medical treatment (which usually involves surgery, radiotherapy, and chemotherapy)?

Yes, they still can. In fact, recent researches have shown that cancer patients who undergo fasting before chemotherapy have less incidence of side effects from chemotherapy. Likewise, intravenous vitamin C therapy during radiotherapy will lessen side effects.

7. In your view, what are the strengths and weaknesses of Western medicine in terms of promoting human health and wellness?

Western medicine is becoming too reductionistic. If you have hypertension, take this pill. If you have heartburn, take this antacid. If you have cancer, remove the organ involved, do chemotherapy, radiotherapy, and that's it.

We have to understand and apply that cancer is systemic, and moreover, cancer also has stem cell potentials. Right now, there is already a research on new drugs that can target these cancer stem cells, which are right now still unresponsive to current chemo drugs and radiotherapy.

8. Since your approach is holistic, would you say that your treatments do not just "cure" the cancer but the entire person? How is this achieved and what are the advantages of this approach?

That's the main idea: To treat/cure/heal the patient holistically. Cancer is a manifestation of a person's divergence to nature and its ways. If we would follow and honor what our bodies need rather than our "wants," our bodies will be able to function in its optimal levels, and hence, will be more able to avoid diseases.

Second, we have to be aware that the person's mind and heart are also part of the individual. We have to address these disturbances, too, before we can truly say we have healed them holistically.

When we address the entire being—physically, emotionally and spiritually—the patients become aware of what is really causing them the disease; therefore, they become conscious on how to reverse their illness.

For more information, visit their website www.thefarm.com.ph

Early Detection and Screening are the Best Ways to Prevent Colorectal Cancer

It has claimed the lives of famous and powerful people – from local and Hollywood stars, to politicians, models, etc. The fact that they succumbed to this deadly disease is proof that colon cancer does not discriminate between rich and poor, young and old or male and female.

And despite the media exposure it has been getting lately, the number of colon cancer patients continue to rise. In 2008, it has caused 608,000 and experts say this number will continue to grow in the coming years. To date, colon cancer is now the fourth leading cause of cancer deaths globally.

However daunting the scenario may be, there are ways to prevent colon cancer. Awareness, prevention, early detection and screening are the main weapons against this menacing disease. Fortunately, cost-effective care for colorectal problems is easily accessible at Colorectal Specialists, Inc., (CSI) located at the MediCard Lifestyle Center.

CSI is the only specialty clinic in the country where colorectal surgeons are grouped together to offer outpatient clinic services. It is at the forefront of colorectal care in the Philippines, utilizing a multi-disciplinary team approach of management. This means that it's not only the surgeon who decides or recommends what a patient needs. The medical oncologist, radiation oncologist and other specialties like palliative care are involved. CSI at the MediCard Lifestyle Center offers state-of-the-art treatment options for haemorrhoids like rubber band ligation, stapled hemorrhoidectomy and trans-anal hemorrhoidal dearterialization or THD.

"We deal with all kinds of colorectal pathology, from benign to malignant cysts, even anorectal, which means from the anus to the anal canals including haemorrhoids, fistula, fissures, incontinence, constipation and of course colon diseases like infections, inflammations and cancers," says Dr. Carlo Angelo Cajucum, one of four colorectal surgeons in CSI.

Dr. Cajucum earned his medical degree from the University of Santo Tomas and did his general surgery residency at Quirino Memorial Medical Center. He then had his fellowship training in colorectal surgery at the Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center, as well as post fellowship training in Sydney's Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. Dr. Cajucum underscores the importance of early detection of signs and symptoms so patients can easily be diagnosed and treated before the disease becomes advanced. This is especially important in a



country like the Philippines, where the majority of patients are diagnosed in the very late stages and where there is no screening. Unlike countries like the US or Australia, the Philippines does not have a screening program.

Dr. Cajucum adds that people who belong to the general risk population, meaning those who are not predisposed to having colorectal cancer, must have themselves screened at age 50, every three to five years. Those at high risk must undergo screening at least upon reaching 40 or 10 years before.

"Supposing you have a relative who was diagnosed with colorectal cancer at 38 years old, then you must have yourself screened at 28 years old," explains Dr. Cajucum. He adds that those who are extremely high risk must be screened as early as 10 – 12 years old.

Dr. Cajucum notes that people should watch out for the following risk factors for colorectal cancer: strong family history or genetics, aging, low fiber intake and those who like to eat grilled or red meat. He adds that the symptoms to watch out for include abdominal pain, fecal blood, and difficulty in defecation.

More than being mindful of the risks, Dr. Cajucum encourages people not to feel embarrassed to seek medical attention in case they experience symptoms of colorectal disease. After all, the stigma won't help anyone recover from cancer.

To know more about colorectal diseases and how you can prevent or cure them, visit Colorectal Specialists, Inc. at the MediCard Lifestyle Center, 51 Paseo de Roxas corner Buendia Avenue, Makati City from Mondays through Fridays, 1-7 pm and Saturdays from 9 am – 3 pm. You may also call them 555-0832. Equally competent doctors in the said facility include Dr. Catherine Co, Dr. Dione Sacdolan and Dr. Ancoy Lopez.



3rd Workshop on Implementing International Accreditation Standards for Hospitals
La Breza Hotel, 155 Mother Ignacia, Quezon City
October 3-5, 2012

HEALTHCARE ORGANIZATIONS GEAR UP FOR INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION

The 3rd Workshop for Implementing International Accreditation Standards for Hospitals was successfully held last October 3-5, 2012 at the La Breza Hotel in Quezon City. Organized by HealthCORE for NABH International, photo shows NABH International faculties (back row, fifth and seventh from left) Dr. Antony Basile, Dr. Bhupendra Kumar Rana and HealthCORE Executive Director Joyce Socao-Alumno (third from left), along with the participants: (seated from left) Dr. Sonia Gonzalez (Philippine Children's Medical Center), Maria Victoria Claustro (Department of Tourism), Dr. Sheryl Miranda (Makati Medical Center), Dr. Cherrie Anne Casallo (Makati Medical Center), Fatima Michaela Diangkinay (LifeScience), Jennifer Ercilla (LifeScience), Dr. Delia Lim (MCU-FDTMF Hospital), Girlie Anne Casao (C.P. Reyes Hospital), Maria Concepcion Silva (Makati Medical Center), Dr. Grace Dela Calzada (Philippine Children's Medical Center); (standing from left) Dr. Giovanni Bontilao (Bontilao Country Hospital), Rodesa Cruzet (Cebu Doctor's University Hospital), Remedios Salonga (Philippine Children's Medical Center), Dr. Jeremias Francis Chan (Center for Health Development-NCR), Gregorio Zurbano (Philippine Children's Medical Center), Anthony Emmanuel Garcia (Philippine Children's Medical Center), Leah Quiroz (Makati Medical Center), Dr. Christine Te (National Kidney and Transplant Institute). For the schedule of upcoming workshops, please visit www.healthcore.com.ph or call +63.908.8887880.



MakatiMed provides faster, better, more comfortable MRI exams with state-of-the-art Siemens machine

In keeping with its commitment to provide modern hospital care, Makati Medical Center, the country's premier health institution launched its new and improved Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) service with the acquisition of German-made MRI machine Siemens MAGNETOM Aera 1.5T, the latest MRI system from industry giant Siemens.

"We want to become the predominant imaging center in the country," said Ramon Santos-Ocampo, MD, Chairman of MakatiMed's Department of Radiology. "We have a dedicated team of radiologists and technologists who have specialized in providing the best imaging service for our patients. Now we're matched with a state-of-the-art machine."

MRI is a radiology technique that provides vivid images of anatomical structures using magnetic fields instead of X-rays. It is used in the detection of abnormalities in organs and tissues such as tumors, aneurysms, tears, or inflammation.

According to Dr. Santos-Ocampo, the Magnetom Aera produces images that are sharper and clearer than other systems, leading to more accurate diagnosis and treatment. The machine is also more patient-friendly. "It has a more spacious design and better lighting to lessen claustrophobia in patients," Dr. Santos-Ocampo said. "The new machine can also handle plus-size patients weighing up to 250 kilograms (500 lbs)."

MakatiMed has also added an MRI-compatible anesthesia machine for patients who need sedation to make the

examination more comfortable.

Other advantages to the new system include additional information in spectroscopy that will help doctors identify breast cancer in its early stages; ability to map iron deposition in the heart or liver; cartilage mapping for detecting abnormal changes in the cartilage in the knees; whole body MRI and diffusion imaging for complete screening; prostate spectroscopy to determine the need for biopsy; and diffusion tensor imaging and functional MRI to aid in planning brain surgery to minimize damage.

"The new system removes the guesswork and variability of the examination present before," said Dr. Santos-Ocampo. "All branches of medicine will benefit from this technology now available in MakatiMed."

For more information, please contact the **Department of Radiology** at 8888.999 locals 2076, 2070, 2071, email mmc@makatimed.net.ph, or visit them at the Ground Floor of Tower 1, Makati Medical Center, 2 Amorsolo Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City.

"The value of experience... is in seeing wisely."

— William Osler, MD,
Founding Professor of Medicine

Experience high-tech "robotic" treatment for back pain



Fulfilling its promise of state-of-the-art healthcare guided by the latest technologies, MakatiMed's Section of Interventional Radiology under the Department of Radiology use the Robio Ex for pain injections.

This is an enhancement on the minimally invasive treatment for back pain that MakatiMed has employed for the past five years. Ramon Santos-Ocampo, MD, Radiology Department Chairman and Section Chief of Interventional Radiology, adapted the Robio Ex, originally designed for precise targeting of lesions for biopsy and ablation, for CT-guided pain injections beginning April this year.

"We decided to get the Robio because we noticed that it allowed us to do our procedures with fewer scans on the patient," he said. "This ultimately results in a lower radiation dose. It also made it easier to plan for more difficult angulations during the biopsy or spine injection procedures."

The Robio Ex has an Integrated Planning Station where Radiologists can plan procedures and a robotic arm that converts the plan to accurate needle trajectory, assuring complete patient comfort.

Typically, a procedure lasts an average of 15 minutes. He said many patients were very satisfied with the treatment, and even referred their friends with similar problems "In some cases, some patients do not require a second injection or follow-up treatment," he said.

He said the Section of Interventional Radiology will continue to provide "minimally invasive solutions for various diseases including cancer treatment, vascular disease and pain management."



Images that give hope.

The MakatiMed Department of Radiology offers a complete range of cutting edge diagnostic and therapeutic radiological services supervised by medical experts:

- X-ray, Ultrasound, CT and MRI examinations using up-to-date machines, results are securely stored in an electronic database for easy retrieval and comparison.
- Interventional Radiology and Radiation Oncology services, including the only Tomotherapy system in the Philippines and a new state-of-the-art brachytherapy system.

For a fast, comfortable and affordable patient experience
Available at the hospital that truly cares.



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