

The Principles of Curative Therapy

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A. General Principles:

1. Most cancers are systemic at the time of diagnosis.
2. The disease which is delineated by the most sophisticated imaging studies is not all the disease the patient has.
3. The invisible disease is by far more lethal than the visible one.
4. The strategy of treatment that addresses the local disease first is good for the doctor but not for the patient.
5. Systemic therapy should be the first assault on the disease in most instances.

B. Principles of therapy:

1. The first battle against the cancer is the most important one.
2. Consequently, one must use the most overwhelming aggressive treatment in the beginning.
3. The standard strategy of using less aggressive treatment in the beginning and refraining from using the most effective agents until the disease relapses is a strategy for failure.
4. Use the maximum tolerated dose of a drug.

5. Treatment should be continued until progression of disease or achievement of a complete remission.
6. The most common mistake is cessation of therapy on achievement of a complete remission.
7. Failure to achieve a remission after one, two or three regimens should not mean that the patient will not benefit from further treatment.

C. What does it take to deliver the above principles:

1. Supportive therapy.
2. Humano-therapy.
3. Freedom from bureaucratic and insurance restrictions.

D. If a patient is incurable today, this does not mean that the patient will never be cured. He may become curable tomorrow.

E. The decision of life and death is not the responsibility of the doctor. His responsibility is to try his utmost.