

Cancer research continues . . .

Primary drug tests promising

United Press International
NEW YORK — For the first time, chemotherapy alone has been used to cure a case of large cell lung cancer, says a report in this Friday's issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association.

The report says the drug lomustine was successfully used to treat a large cell lung cancer, the type that makes up 20 percent of lung cancer cases, in a 47-year-old male.

The cancer had spread in his chest and to his groin.

The report from Dr. Gerald J. Coates of the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis says that within six weeks of beginning treatment in March 1973 the cancer started to retreat and three months later the patient's chest X-rays were essentially normal.

Currently the patient is without evidence of disease more than four years after diagnosis and more than 10 years after stopping chemotherapy, Voskia said in the report.

During these four years he has worked fulltime except as clinic and hospitalization required.

The patient died some months after — not of cancer but of pneumonia.

The drug used weakened his defenses against infection and as a result the pneumonia, got a fatal twist — not an unusual situation for cancer victims cured by drugs.

At the time of death, the "cured" patient had been free of the large-cell lung cancer for five years.

Skin cancer most common form, easiest to cure

Famed dermatologist finds way to cancer clue

United Press International
BUFFALO, N.Y. — A noted cancer specialist — once faced daily with the trauma of dying children — decided a quarter century ago there must be an easier way to search for an end to cancer.

Dr. Edmund Klein, associate chief of dermatology at Roswell Park Memorial Institute, turned to skin ailments after his first clinical experience with youthful leukemia victims at Harvard's Children's Hospital.

"What I was most impressed by, was that here one of the most difficult of medical problems was being investigated and researched under the most inauspicious circumstances, the most difficult of circumstances," Klein said.

"What could be worse than trying to find an answer to a complicated question by doing it in an environment which was about as complicated as could be by the fact that you had a dying child on your hands?" he asked.

Klein turned to what he believed would be an easier route of finding a clue to the cancer riddle.

"The best possible way of looking for an answer was to use the simplest of problems in cancer — and that, of course, was skin cancer," he said.

For his role in the development of the anti-cancer drug,

fluorouracil, Klein received the prized Lasker Award in 1972 and the Founder's Award in 1975.

He has also received 40 or more awards, some of which decorate his office walls, alongside autographed pictures of personalities like New York Gov. Hugh Carey and Rep. Jack Kemp, R-N.Y., and an Ann Landers column entitled "Dr. Klein Debunks Hair Dye Scare."

When he first started experimenting with skin cancer treatments, Klein said he "thought that perhaps a good approach would be to take the same drug that was being given by mouth or vein and put it directly on the cancer."

The first time he tried putting a large dose of a drug directly on a tumor but giving little to the patient on a whole was to "a distant relative of (then) President Eisenhower" who had cancer that had spread to his finger.

"The next day when we looked at the tumor, it (the tumor) had changed completely," and eventually fell off, he said. Although the patient eventually died of his disease, cancer never returned to the finger.

He later was consulted by the White House when President Lyndon Johnson had skin cancer.

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer and, for most types, the easiest to cure. There are more than 300,000 new skin cancer

cases annually in the United States. Most of 6,000 skin cancer deaths expected to occur in the nation in 1978 are caused by malignant moles, called melanoma.

Klein said 80 percent of skin cancer victims are blondes, redheads and persons with blue eyes because their skin has less melanin (a pigment which protect the skin cells from the sun), but he said there is also an "undefinable ethnic factor" involved.

"Irishmen or Welshmen have a much higher susceptibility toward skin cancer than can be accounted for either by exposure to sun or by degree of pigmentation," Klein said. But he acknowledged that some of the worst cases he has seen were in blacks or American Indians who lack pigment in one area of the body.

In Europe, only darker-skin people live near the Mediterranean, because the "lighter-skinned stock (that was susceptible to skin cancer) died out long ago," he said.

Higher incidence of skin cancer arise when light-skinned Americans move to the sunbelt states; and in South Africa and Australia where whites have migrated to a climate that has a "higher rate of ultraviolet exposure," Klein said.

People past middle-age are more likely to get skin cancer "since every bit of ultraviolet has an accumulative affect in damaging the skin," he said.

Cancer-ridden patient cured by chemotherapy, report says

United Press International
CHICAGO — A new vaccine whose early tests show a high five-year survival rate among victims of lung cancer could be used to help prevent the disease in high-risk patients such as cigarette smokers, a researcher says.

Dr. Jules E. Harris, who recently left the University of Ottawa in Canada to become director of medical oncology (cancer science) at Chicago's Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center, said

Monday he was heartened by the early testing of the vaccine.

Lung cancer victims who were given the vaccine in intervals of 30, 60 and 90 days after surgery achieved a five-year survival rate of 80 percent, Harris said. That means 80 percent of the victims who took the vaccine were alive five years later. The usual survival rate for victims undergoing lung cancer surgery is 30 percent, Harris said.

He also said he is optimistic the vaccine not only could extend the

lives of lung cancer victims, but also may one day be used to prevent lung cancer in high-risk patients, such as heavy smokers, who have not contracted the disease.

Harris said the vaccine is being tested among 300 patients at 11 institutions in North America. One of them, the Roswell Park Institute of Buffalo, N.Y., will present data on its testing to the upcoming meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology and the American Association of Cancer Researchers.

Dallas epidemic manufactured

United Press International
AUSTIN — A Texas Department of Health official has accused the Center for Disease Control of "manufacturing" an epidemic of Legionnaires disease in Dallas and implicating some hotels by suggesting a link between the disease and hotel air conditioning systems.

The Center for Disease Control released a report last week saying a small amount of air that flowed through water cooling towers and escaped into six Dallas hotels was responsible for 18 cases of Legionnaires disease among persons attending a Veterans of Foreign Affairs convention.

Webb said the CDC was making a "deal" of the fact the Legionnaires bacteria was found in the hotels' cooling towers, when in fact it would be found in a lot of places if tests were done.

He said tests on the health department's own water cooling tower and those of 33 other water towers in Austin also showed traces of Legionnaires disease.

"The basic problem with the CDC is that their set up to do epidemiology is lousy," Webb said. "The CDC came to town (Dallas) to study an epidemic and was not the least abashed when there wasn't an epidemic to go ahead and manufacture one."

He said none of the Texans who attended the VFW convention in Dallas in August came down with the disease.

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