Herbal Medicine 3

Therapeutics 3.2

Herbal Approaches to Cancer
In today’s topic you will learn:

- Review: what is cancer? Comparative models and explanations
- Addressing causes
- Working systemically (e.g. detoxification)
- The “Anti-cancer” herbs
- The role of adaptogens
- Some alternative treatment models
- Working alongside conventional cancer treatments
What is Cancer?

Cancer is a term used for diseases in which abnormal cells divide without control and are able to invade other tissues. Cancer cells can spread to other parts of the body through the blood and lymph systems.

(National Cancer Institute website)
Neoplasia: Disorders of Cell Proliferation and Differentiation

- Neoplasia is the second most common cause of death in Western populations.
- Neoplasms are classified by their behaviour as either **benign** or **malignant**.
- The absolute criterion of malignancy is invasiveness, which may lead to dissemination of neoplastic cells to many other parts of the body (metastasis).
- Fundamental to the genesis of neoplasms are loss of normal control of cell proliferation leading to principally monoclonal cell populations and loss of normal differentiation.
Cancer types

- **Carcinoma** - cancer that begins in the skin or in tissues that line or cover internal organs.
- **Sarcoma** - cancer that begins in bone, cartilage, fat, muscle, blood vessels, or other connective or supportive tissue.
- **Leukemia** - cancer that starts in blood-forming tissue such as the bone marrow and causes large numbers of abnormal blood cells to be produced and enter the blood.
- **Lymphoma and myeloma** - cancers that begin in the cells of the immune system.
- **Central nervous system cancers** - cancers that begin in the tissues of the brain and spinal cord.
What causes cancer?

- Abnormal cell division
- Failure of the cell cycle control system
- Failure of immunity, e.g. “tumour surveillance”
- Exposure to “Carcinogens” (e.g. tobacco smoke, radiation, etc)
“The primary functions of the cell-cycle control system are to trigger cell-cycle events at the appropriate time, in the correct order, and only once per cell cycle.”

The Cell Division Cycle. 2004 New Science Press Ltd.
Alternative theories

- “Toxic” lifestyle combined with poor detoxification and elimination
- Terrain - hyperacidity, pleomorphism (Béchamp, Young)
- Body attempting to accommodate toxins that can’t be eliminated
- Cancer as healing mechanism (Trophoblast theory)
- Alternative metabolism - cells in rebellion! (c.f. homeopathic cancer miasm)
- Emotional trauma (Ryke Geerd Hamer, GNM)
Alternative theories

A New Paradigm for Sickness & Disease
- Physical and/or Emotional Disturbance
- Cellular Disorganization
- Developmental Morbidity
- Excess Acidity
- Acids are the expression of ALL Sickness and Disease

The pH Miracle Theory

There is only one physiological state of imbalance - the over-acidification of the blood then tissues, due to an inverted way of living, eating and thinking.

This over-acidification leads to cellular degeneration and the birth of microorganisms, that generate acids that produce the symptoms we call “disease”.

When the pH is wrong, oxygen falls, cells respire in an anaerobic environment by fermentation giving rise to increased acidity - cancer is a result of an ACID environment.

Otto Warburg, Nobel Prize in Medicine, 1932

~ Dr. Robert O. Young
Probable causes

- Poor diet - too much processed, refined foods, not enough fresh produce, enzyme and micronutrient-rich foods
- Environmental toxins: agrochemicals, industrial chemicals, food and cosmetic additives, radiation
- Drugs and medication including vaccination?
- Stress and negative thinking patterns
1955 American Cancer Society advertising circular states "cancer will strike one of every four persons now living. More children from 3 to 15 years of age die of cancer than from any other disease." (50 years before, cancer was unheard of in children). According to the ACS, they are predicting 6.4 million deaths from cancer, compared with 128,000 in 1933—an increase of 6.2 million cases in 22 years. Vaccination, pesticide use and chemical pollution are the main factors that have increased since 1933.
“so-called diseases as we have understood them until now do not exist. Rather, they are Meaningful Special Biological Programs of Nature. And they do not have to be treated with “therapy“, but must be left to run their course because they always have a biological purpose”.

Ryke Geerard Hamer
Cancer in Iridology

- Broy’s “precarcinomatic” types - psoric, sycotic, carbon-nitrogen
- The Dyscratic diathesis
- Individual signs, e.g. Schnabel and asparagus lacunae, tar pigments, transversals
- Mainly emphasizes a *systemic* aetiology
Cancer in Iridology

Copyright CNM 2014-15: Herbal Medicine 3 – Therapeutics 3.2. PJM
Cancer in TCM

- General tonification: replenish the blood and qi, fortify the organs and resume the yin-yang balance
- Clearing toxic heat: TCM believes that toxic heat is the major cause for cancer progression, especially in middle and late-stage patients
- Supplementing blood and dissipating stasis: blood stasis is also associated with tumours, pain in a fixed location, a purplish tongue, purple discoloration of the skin, dry and rough skin, brittle nails and varicose veins
Cancer in TCM

- Dispersing phlegm to soften lumps: phlegm and dampness act throughout the course of cancer development causing a variety of problems, including lumps, chest and abdominal distention, nausea, vomiting, limb weakness and puffiness.

- Detoxifying with toxic substances: "using poison as an antidote to poison" – herbal “chemotherapy”

- External treatments: ointments, inhalations, enemas, suppositories, moxibustion
“Arbuda” – hard swellings – can be triggered or activated by trauma
“Granthi” – smaller swellings and lumps
Arbuda are classified according to dosha, site, prognosis or tissue type
Prognosis – Sadhya (curable, probably refer to benign cysts and tumours) or Asadhya (incurable)
Malignant tumours are dangerous as they tend to involve all three doshas (tridosaja) resulting in loss of mutual co-ordination of these control systems
Later stages are considered a derangement or “vitiation” of Kapha

Cancer in Ayurveda

- **Vata aggravating factors**: excessive intake of bitter, pungent, astringent, dry foods and stressful conditions.

- **Pitta aggravating factors**: excessive intake of sour, salty, fried foods and excessive anger.

- **Kapha aggravating factors**: excessive intake of sweet, oily food and sedentary nature.

- **Rakta aggravating factors**: excessive intake of acid or alkali containing foods. Fried and roasted foods, alcoholic beverages, sour fruits are some examples. Excessive anger or severe emotional upset, sunbathing or working under scorching sun or near fire and hot conditions, etc. are some other causes.

- **Mamsa aggravating factors**: excessive use of exudative foods like meat, fish, yoghurt, milk and cream. Behaviours leading to exudation like sleeping during the day and overeating are some of the causes for pathogens invading the fatty tissues.

Cancer in Ayurveda

“Herbal decoctions consisting of multiple herbs each possessing tremendous potential for a cancer cure are commonly used in Ayurveda. These formulations are reported to work on multiple biochemical pathways and are capable of influencing several organ systems simultaneously. The benefit of an herbal decoction is that it can nourish the body as a whole by supporting various organ systems [25]. Many of the herbs mentioned below have scientifically-proven anti-cancerous properties and are used for the treatment of various cancers.”

Cancer in Ayurveda

- **Andrographis paniculata**
  - The extract and isolated diterpenes (andrographiside and neoandrographolide) from this plant are proved to be beneficial against tumourigenesis by their anti-lipoperoxidative action and by enhanced carcinogen detoxification action.

- **Piper longum**
  - Piperine, an active alkaloid extracted from this plant has been used as an ingredient of ayurvedic anticancer formulations because of its anti-oxidative potency in both in vitro and in vivo conditions [34].

“[Eli] Jones began offering special courses in the treatment of cancer towards the latter part of the 19th century for other Eclectics and medical doctors. His protocol included the use of special diet, epsom salts baths, lifestyle counseling and guidance, escharotic salves and various herbs taken both internally and applied externally as appropriate. In this book he describes the "Compound Syrup of Scrophularia" as his all around most effective remedy for all types of cancer.”

Cancer in Western Herbal Medicine

- Dr Christopher’s *Herbal Blood Purifying Combination* (Taken from William Hoxsey’s formula:

  - *Trifolium pratense*
  - *Larrea tridentata*
  - *Glycyrrhiza glabra*
  - *Amygdalus / Prunus persica*
  - *Phyolacca americana*
  - *Berberis aquifolium*
  - *Stillingia sylvatica*
  - *Zanthoxylum clava herculis*
  - *Arctium lappa*
  - *Rhamnus cathartica*
Dr Richard Schulze:

- Multifactorial, naturopathic approach
- Deep tissue cleansing by activating all detoxification and elimination channels
- Juice fasting, raw foods
- The 30-Day “Incurables” program
Herbal categories and actions

- Alteratives and depuratives
- Digestive stimulants and cleansers: bitters, carminatives, cathartics and purgatives
- Immunomodulators / Adaptogens
- Nervines and anxiolytics
- Others as individually selected
Alteratives

- *Trifolium pratense*: often known as the “anti-cancer” herb; studies show it may inhibit angiogenesis
- *Echinacea spp.*: Eclectic favourite for cancer (Tom Meyer)
- *Arctium lappa*: ingredient of many North American anti-cancer formulae, including *ESSIAC*; desmutagenic effects
- *Phytolacca americana*: powerful lymph cleanser, immunomodulator and cytotoxic herb
- *Larrea tridentata*: powerful North American lymph and deep tissue cleanser; often combined with *Phytolacca*
The role of digestive stimulants

- Promote uptake of vital nutrients
- Cleanse and heal digestive tract, remove retained waste matter and normalise colon function, prevent autointoxication
- Cleanse, heal and normalise liver function
- Promote secretion of pancreatic enzymes (see “Trophoblast” theory, below)
Immunomodulating herbs

- Echinacea angustifolia/purpurea
- Astragalus membranaceous
- Eleutherococcus senticosus
- Andrographis paniculata
- Schisandra chinensis
- Arctium lappa
- Mushrooms: Cordyceps, Ganoderma, Shiitake, Trametes
- Most are also adaptogens
Arctium lappa

Burdock is a close relative to such well-known herbs as echinacea, dandelion, and feverfew, though it does not currently share the spotlight those other herbs are enjoying. Burdock root, greens, and seeds were known to the ancient Greeks as healing remedies, and in Western herbalism they were important foods and medicines throughout the middle ages. Their nutritional content of vitamins and minerals is high, yet even more interesting is their rich complement of active medicinal compounds. Modern research has isolated chemical constituents from burdock that have proven to be anti-bacterial, anti-fungal, and, most importantly, tumor-protective and desmutagenic. Desmutagens are substances that inactivate mutagens (cancer-causing agents) by reacting with them and "taking them out of action." Mutagens include pesticides, natural chemicals from plants, and compounds that are created from foods (such as meats) by cooking. Such potentially cancer-causing compounds are now abundant in our food, water, and air, and many of them are already stored in our fat tissues.
Cytotoxic herbs

- Trifolium pratense
- Phytolacca decandra
- Larrea tridentata
- Viola tricolor
- Galium aparine
- Equisetum arvense
- Chelidonium major

Some are powerful - to be used with caution
A use for Japanese Knotweed?

Japanese Knotweed root (*Polygonum cuspidatum*) This herb is a major medicine in TCM, but is mostly considered an aggressive, obnoxious weed in the western world. It is known as Hu Zhang in China and is used for clearing damp heat conditions (jaundice, dysentery, hepatitis, bronchitis, urinary tract infections), and wind/damp or hot/damp conditions with blood stasis and pain (rheumatoid arthritis, Lyme arthralgia, trauma injuries). The herb is also used as a syrup for treating gastric and intestinal cancers and is used in combination with Millettia bark, Dang Gui, and Licorice for preventing and treating leukopenia caused by radiation therapy. Japanese Knotweed is also one of the richest sources of the highly active stilbene, Resveratrol which is antibacterial, antifungal, antioxidant, antiinflammatory, and an antimutagen. It also has been shown to protect against liver damage (in vivo), and inhibit atherosclerosis. Resveratrol has also been found in laboratory studies to induce apoptosis of lymphoblastic leukemia, colorectal cancer, medulloblastoma, head and neck squamous cell cancer, breast cancer, gliomas, and prostate cancer cells. In other in vitro studies, it has also been found to down-regulate many of the intracellular signaling pathways that are necessary for tumorigenesis and metastasis. Resveratrol has also been found to protect normal cells against the effects of radiotherapy while increasing its efficacy against cancer cells.
Some alternative cancer protocols

- Vitamin C Therapy (Linus Pauling)
- Gerson Therapy (Max Gerson)
- The “Trophoblast” theory and pancreatic enzyme therapy (John Bear & Ernst T Krebs)
Vitamin C Therapy

Linus Pauling, the Nobel Prize-winning scientist, investigated the possibility of using vitamin C for cancer. One hundred terminal cancer patients were given 10 grams of vitamin C daily (2.5 grams four times per day). They lived an average of 210 days, compared with hospital records of 1,000 "matched controls" (similar patients) who averaged only 50 days. A follow-up showed an even wider gap between the vitamin C and control groups.

Ten grams of vitamin C a day is a tremendous amount. Due to the acid nature of vitamin C, such a large amount is likely to produce digestion distress unless a buffered type of vitamin C such as Ester-C is used.
Max Gerson (1881 – 1959): the Gerson therapy for cancer is legendary not only for its many complete and astonishing cures in very serious cases, but also for attracting the attention of the AMA, who tried (and are still trying) to shut it down.

- Juicing and cleansing, enzyme-rich foods, colonics and enemas, supplements
- Different approaches/supplements for different tumours
Trophoblast Theory

- Cancer is a functional repair tissue
- Dr John Beard, Edinburgh University, 1902
- Theory “not yet disproved”
- Ernst T Krebs & Ernst T Krebs jr. – Laetrile
- The trophoblast theory of cancer (John Beard, 1857-1924) revisited
  
  [Link](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/1107920)
Trophoblast Theory

- **Trophoblast** cells appear at the sight of chronic injury or other damage
- simple cells that hold the space for the slower growing, more complicated cells such as liver or kidney cells
- Trophoblast cells also appear at the uterus wall during pregnancy. They perform their rapid growth preparing a place for the embryo to attach itself
- pancreatic secretions are supposed to destroy the trophoblast cells
- The failure to destroy these fast growing cells allows a tumor to develop.
- The body does not recognize the growing tumor as a problem since the cells often grow during a healing process
- Trophoblast cells give off a unique hormone, CGH (chorionic gonadotrophic hormone), found in people who have serious injuries, are pregnant, or have cancer (you can get a test for cancer that simply looks for this hormone)
In August 2004 the results of a study connecting carbohydrate consumption and cancer were released. Researchers interviewed 1,866 women aged 20 to 75 in Mexico City about their diets and found that breast cancer risk rose with carbohydrate consumption. Those who ate the most carbohydrates had more than twice the risk of breast cancer than those who ate the least amount of carbohydrates. The increased risk of breast cancer was seen both in premenopausal and postmenopausal women.
Diabetes – Cancer connection

The rate of cancer dramatically increased shortly after sugar cane was discovered and became popular. Sugar is the ultimate carbohydrate. It is turned into blood sugar faster than any other food and puts a tremendous strain on the pancreas. Diabetics who suffer from deficient pancreas activity are three times more likely to get cancer than other people.

(Trophoblast Theory of Cancer)
Laetrile

Also called B-17 or Amygdalin, Laetrile is obtained from the seeds found in Apricot pits. It is one of the many nitrilosides found in nature. The pancreas needs nitriloside to perform well.
30-day “Incurables” program

Vegan, raw foods and juices

Supplementary routines - hydrotherapy, enemas and colonics, skin brushing, kidney and liver flushing, sun/air bathing, meditation

Herbal formulae: kidney/bladder, liver/GB, intestinal corrective formulae, blood and lymph cleanser, immune booster
Working alongside conventional medicine

- Protect liver cells - Milk Thistle
- Protect against toxic damage - Siberian Ginseng, Astragalus, Schisandra, Ganoderma
- Work between chemo cycles if possible
- Treat symptoms as they arise, especially side effects of chemotherapy
- Support general constitution
- Aftercare - full detox treatment and dietary reform
Re-occurrence

- 5-year survival statistics: misleading as people progress very differently through the disease
- You could die the day after your 5 years is up and you would still contribute to medical success statistics
- Necessity for change
- Rates of relapse do not reflect the success of treatment, but the degree of change afterwards
Cure or management?

- Living with cancer, not dying of it
- Supporting systemic vitality
- Promoting positive health
- Focussing on life not death
References and suggested reading


Christopher, J. R., (1976), The School of Natural Healing, Springville, Christopher publications

Gerson Therapy http://www.mindyourbody.info/gerson/gersonarticle.html, accessed 2.4.10

References and suggested reading


TCM Approahces to Cancer Treatment, http://www.shen-nong.com/eng/exam/specialties_cancertreatment.html; accessed 5.4.15


The National Cancer Institute (USA) http://www.cancer.gov/, accessed 10.7.10