

A Day of Caring

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A Day of Caring has become an annual educational event and fashion show for breast cancer patients and survivors. Earlier this year, 500 attendees arrived at the Radisson Hotel in Miami, Fla. Twenty of south Florida's physicians each donated an hour of their time to lecture on topics such as surgery; radiation; genetics; reconstruction; clinical trials; research; and Chinese medicine.

The faculty consisted of literally a "who's who" of breast cancer oncology. Each doctor selflessly served these patients by providing options of which they had a passionate understanding. For the second year, I had the opportunity to share what I know about Chinese medicine in this setting. As a 14-year survivor of breast cancer, I see medicine both as a physician and a patient. This experience, coupled with my being the father of a child who survived cancer, fuels an unparalleled passion obvious to all who attend my lectures.

The subject of my talk was *fu zheng* therapy. All good doctors are the end result of good training, and I continue in this tradition. *Fu zheng* therapy is an integrative approach to oncology. Chinese medicine is one important spoke in a wheel of treatment highly maintained in a team effort. Protocols differ depending on the presentation and staging of the patient.

At the lecture, I discussed the ongoing case histories of three patients (X, Y and Z).

Patient X has fibroid tissue; a negative mammogram; and a familial history of breast cancer. Her tongue and pulse are consistent with long-term phlegm accumulation. She has been placed on *er chen tang* long-term; taught *qigong*; and given Five Element lifestyle counseling. Her quarterly visits should contribute to her remaining healthy.

Patient Y may present postoperative with or without lymph node involvement. Chemotherapy and/or radiation are necessary to prevent metastatic disease. However, these interventions result in serious injury to the *qi* and blood. Patient Y will be placed on *bing de ling*, with one ounce taken twice daily. *Bing de ling* increases alpha-interferon and interleukin II levels, and thus upregulates a weakened immune system. She will be seen twice weekly.

Scalp acupuncture, combined with herbal pharmacology, will address branch presentations, some of which can be serious. *Qi* deficiency, along with low counts of red blood cells; white blood cells; hematocrit; neutrophils; etc., may be altered with injections of *sheng mai*, *huang qi*, *dan shen* or *ci wu jiao*. Leukocytopenia and neutropenia respond well to short-term *ba zhen tang*, along with acupoint injection therapy. Radiation pneumonitis may be averted when seen early on as a serious yin deficiency and treated as such with *zou gi wan* (five grams, taken twice daily). *Qigong* for patient Y will be encouraged with even greater emphasis.

Patient Z presents with metastatic bone disease. Her breast cancer has been treated with three intervals of chemotherapy over three years. She arrived at our office depressed and in pain. Her tumor markers consistently double. The patient's main lesion is on her iliac crest, with additional uptake along the spine. Patient Z was placed on *bing de ling* (one ounce twice a day). Her tongue and pulse present both wind and cold. Alternating acupoint injections of *tian ma* and *ci wu jiao*

relieve her pain. Occasional acupoint injections of *shen mai* relieve the cold presentation.

Patient Z remains free of depression and pain. Her quality of life is very productive. Her tumor markers continue to increase, yet she views her progress optimistically due to being pain free. She finds *qigong* difficult, yet possible.

Several prominent oncologists listened to the lecture, and were excited by possible alternatives to drugs (like Procrit and Neuprin) for bone marrow suppression and anemia. This article is by no means a "cookie cutter" protocol for the treatment of breast cancer. Many of my colleagues also contributed greatly to the health and welfare of cancer patients, and this lecture represents their contributions, as well.

Finally, one physician may assume the burden of representing his entire profession, yet he hopes he is the example through which others will also gain recognition. My heart and spiritual insight have been tempered by Dr. Mayers; my oncological knowledge has been taught, directed and nurtured by Dr. Ruan Zhao; and my knowledge of scalp acupuncture was provided by Dr. Huo. It is only with the transfer of knowledge that others get to serve the world!

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