

Senator Peter Cooke

Dear Sir,

I believe that you are heading up an inquiry into treatment for cancer patients. I would like to send a submission after having had four personal dealings with this disease in the past seven years.

Personal case number one: My father was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 1997. He was offered no medical treatment, but had surgical bypasses at different times over the two years before he died. He did not, nor was he encouraged to discuss, his condition and he received no counseling. Dad had a hard last few months in which he just wasted away. In my opinion, surgical interventions did not help, only caused Dad unnecessary suffering.

Personal case number two: I was diagnosed with a malignant melanoma also in 1997. It was successfully surgically excised; I felt very positive as to the outcome; I knew all there was to know and questioned the doctors continually; I took control of my condition!

Personal case number three: In 2002 my mother was diagnosed with oesophagial and stomach cancer. Surgery was not an option, nor was chemotherapy, (her age was 85) according to her doctor. She was more or less told that she had about six months to live. We decided to attend a ten day live in course at the Ian Gawler Foundation. It proved to be an excellent course for both my mother and myself. We learnt the best way to eat; how to meditate; how to alleviate stress; to live in the present; to cope with Mum's condition; to ask many questions of doctors; in other words to take control of our lives and make our own decisions. Mum lived another eighteen months of good life and , at the end, we all knew how to cope very well.

Personal case number four: Last September my husband was diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma. He is a Traditionalist, so would not consider Ian Gawler's methods. He believes what the doctors tell him and he is currently on medication (chemotherapy tablets and a steroid) every seven weeks for a year. However, we ask many questions of the doctor and know what is going on.

I have a problem with chemotherapy and radiotherapy in that it kills the immune system just when you need it the most. I would like to see much more research funding going to keeping the immune system healthy and allowing ongoing research into the success of programs such as Ian Gawler's. The fact that these programs seem to give a much better quality of life, hope (and why) should be looked into. Patients should have more knowledge and say in their treatments.

Thank you,
Mrs. Beverley Burgess.