ARGUMENT

THE WONDER DRUG
Rochelle Erhart

(1) At some point in life, everyone is deeply affected by the terrible disease known as cancer. Those who escape it themselves will almost certainly face it when it strikes a family member or friend. In the United States alone, one out of every four people suffers from cancer, and one out of every five will ultimately die from it. In efforts to fight this formidable enemy, millions of dollars and years of research are spent in laboratories all across the nation, but a real cure has yet to be discovered. Unless they are able to undergo surgery, most cancer patients have to settle for the two widely accepted methods of treatment, chemotherapy and radiation. However, an alternative therapy does exist, one which unfortunately remains obscure to the majority of cancer victims. Available at all drug stores and health food stores, hiding behind the innocent label "Ascorbic Acid," this unpublicized cancer fighter is commonly known as vitamin C. The cancer-curing potential of this amazing little wonder drug deserves immediate attention in the medical world. Vitamin C combats cancer better than any other form of conventional cancer treatment.

(2) Cancer begins in the cells of the body. As the fundamental unit of the human body, each cell has a specific function. Like an enormous factory, the human body uses up billions of these units in the course of a day. By a
phenomenal dividing process, these cells reproduce themselves to replace old cells. Unfortunately, sometimes the manufacturing process goes wrong: one cell becomes defective, or cancerous, and all the descendants of that cell inherit the defect. Unable to perform any specific function, the faulty cancer cells only multiply, invade, and eventually destroy the tissue in which they dwell, thus disrupting the intricate systems and precise workings of the body.

Medical science has long recognized this basic idea behind cancer but still has little control over the disease. Surgery, the oldest method of treatment, appears to be the obvious answer: simply remove the cancerous mass and the disease should disappear. This would be the ideal cure, but cancerous cells often spread randomly throughout the body tissue, making the defective cells virtually impossible to isolate and remove. Vitamin C treatment, however, avoids this problem because it permeates all the body tissue via the circulatory system. Lasting from four to ten hours, cancer operations place intense strain on an already weakened body, and if even a few mutated cells are left behind, a cancer tumor can quickly grow again. A patient must also be prepared to pay the expensive hospital bill for both the surgery and recovery period.

The other two conventional methods, chemotherapy and radiation, are based on the same idea—to kill the cancerous cells by some type of lethal dosage. Chemotherapy, the treatment of cancer by toxic chemicals taken orally or through an I.V., is used when cancerous cells have spread throughout the body. Most cancers, except acute leukemia and early breast cancer, are not curable by chemotherapy; however, the poisonous drugs can extend life in cancer patients who respond to them. Although sounding positive in theory, chemotherapy has one very negative drawback—it has
detrimental side effects on the normal, healthy cells of the body. Vitamin C, on the other hand, has no harmful effect on healthy tissue. The toxic drugs of chemotherapy damage the stomach, intestines, hair follicles, and bone marrow. Cancer patients treated with chemotherapy experience nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, dehydration, hair loss, and mental depression. Utilized mainly in patients with defined cancerous masses, radiation treats cancer with highly active, invisible beams of energy called gamma rays to destroy the cancer tumor with a minimum dose to healthy tissue. Side effects, except for fatigue and nausea, are only felt in the irradiated area, but radiation appears to be less effective overall in killing cancer than chemotherapy.

The alternative therapy, vitamin C, operates on a totally different principle. An explanation of its basic function in the body will illustrate the vitamin's effectiveness. The substance which holds body cells in check and keeps them from reproducing uncontrollably is collagen, the body "cement." Cells are imbedded in collagen; if anything interferes with the production of this cement, the cells lose their cohesion and are free to reproduce haphazardly while invading other tissue. Vitamin C restrains the production of the enzyme hyaluronidase that weakens collagen. If the body's C level is too low, hyaluronidase will dissolve the body cement and allow random cell reproduction, as in cancer. Thus, vitamin C must be present for a strong and ample supply of collagen, which then can ward off an environment conducive to cancer.

One of the first studies of vitamin C therapy that received any notice was carried out by Doctors Linus Pauling and Ewan Cameron in 1971. Eleven hundred patients suffering from terminal cancer were used in the project; all had been
judged to be untreatable by standard methods—surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation. One thousand served as controls while one hundred patients were treated with ten grams of vitamin C daily. On the average, the ascorbate-treated cancer patients survived three hundred days longer than the one thousand control patients.\(^1\) Pauling, Nobel Prize winner and longtime advocate of vitamin C, enthusiastically continues his research and asserts that if the public took ten grams of vitamin C per day, "only a quarter as many people would die of cancer at any given age."\(^2\)

(7) An earlier study reported by E. Greer also illustrates the cancer-curing potential of vitamin C. In 1954 a seventy-one-year-old executive of an oil company was diagnosed to have chronic myelogenous leukemia (cancer of the blood). He immediately began taking vitamin C at the rate of twenty-four grams a day because he claimed to feel much better when he took these overwhelming doses of ascorbic acid. During his war against leukemia with vitamin C, he constantly remarked about his feeling of well-being and continued his work as an executive. Twice he stopped taking the vitamin on the insistence of his skeptical physician, and both times his liver and spleen became soft, his temperature rose, and he complained of fatigue and nausea—typical leukemia symptoms. When he started ascorbic acid treatment again, all his symptoms cleared within six hours. A year and a half later the patient suddenly died of cardiac decompensation. His doctor, however, claimed his spleen was firm and he showed no signs of progressed leukemia at the time of death. The case history concludes with the statement, "The intake of the huge doses of ascorbic acid appeared essential for the welfare of the patient."\(^3\)

(8) Not only is vitamin C more effective, but it also outshines other cancer treatments in convenience and expense.
Vitamin C can be taken in several simple ways. In powder form, it can be dissolved in a glass of water and swallowed with no problem at prescribed intervals during the day. Pills and capsules are consumed with water too. The intravenous injection, basically just a quick shot in the vein, is also employed by doctors to administer vitamin C, especially in the beginning of a cancer treatment to help the patient's body become accustomed to large ascorbic dosage. All these forms of vitamin C are simple, fast, and inexpensive to administer. Unlike other treatments, they require no special hospital fees except for the pharmaceutical charge for the vitamin. Even the injections can be self-administered.

While all other cancer treatments have undesirable side effects, the alternative therapy, vitamin C, has beneficial side effects. Selectively toxic to cancer cells only, it boosts the body's immune system while improving a patient's well-being and attitude toward life. The example of Mrs. Shirley Greene, a patient of medical nutritionist Dr. P. L. Telson, proves this point. Before her first visit in early 1980 to Telson, Mrs. Greene had been receiving both chemotherapy and radiation for several months to treat her oat-cell cancer of the right lung, a very deadly type of cancer. Her eyes staring from two black holes bored into her skull, her skin resembling pale smooth marble, she looked like someone who had just escaped from a Nazi concentration camp. The treatment had been so toxic that she had lost all the hair on her body, and she walked as though moving through water in slow motion. After Dr. Telson informed her of vitamin C as an alternative therapy, Mrs. Greene quickly accepted the idea and stopped all other conventional treatment. Telson started her on two grams, and within a month she was taking thirty grams a day. By this time the patient looked as if
she had been reborn. Eyes sparkling, skin glowing pink, she returned to work and social activity. As a rule, patients with oak-cell cancer die within four months of diagnosis; however, Mrs. Greene, my Aunt Shirley with whom I had dinner two Sundays ago, is still alive today, leading a full and happy life. Incidentally, after three weeks of vitamin C therapy, she visited her initial doctors for a check-up. Astonished and slightly embarrassed, they could find no trace of her cancer!

(10) Cancer research costs the United States Government approximately nine hundred million dollars a year. Nearly all of this money is spent in screening all sorts of poisonous chemicals for use in fighting cancer, while a harmless substance like ascorbic acid, with so much potential, lies around neglected and ignored. As Linus Pauling puts it, the medical community "can't believe cancer can be controlled in an easy and cheap way." However, after eight long years of denial from the National Cancer Institute, Pauling has finally been awarded an NCI grant of $200,000 to study his hypothesis. Although this marks a major breakthrough in the recognition of vitamin C therapy against cancer, cancer victims deserve to know that research has already proven vitamin C more effective and convenient than conventional cancer treatments. Until this receives acknowledgement, each passing day may mean more lives wasted--lives which vitamin C could probably have saved.
Endnotes


2 Quoted in Pogash, p. 88.


Bibliography

