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Swiss Study Group for Complementary and Alternative Methods in Cancer (SCAC)

Patronage: Swiss Society for Oncology (SGO), Swiss Society for Medical Oncology (SGMO),
Swiss Institute for Applied Cancer Research (SIAC)

Hamer's «New Medicine»

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Summary

After careful study of the literature and other available information, the Study Group for Complementary and Alternative Methods in Cancer (SCAC) and the Swiss Cancer League (SCL) have found no evidence that the assertions of Ryke Geerd Hamer are correct, or that the method of cancer treatment which he propagates is effective. They therefore advise against their use in the treatment of cancer.

Inventor

Ryke Geerd Hamer (aged 65) himself states that he studied physics. He also studied medicine and went on to train in internal medicine. In 1978 his son Dirk, then 19 years of age, became the innocent victim of a shoot-out and died from his injuries. Soon afterwards R.G. Hamer fell ill with testicular cancer for which he underwent surgery. He subsequently developed his theory of the «Iron Rule of Cancer».

Hamer mainly became known through his association with the Olivia Pilhar cancer case in 1995. The girl's parents, convinced supporters of his hypotheses, withheld conventional therapy from their child; the authorities finally removed their rights of care and control, and the parents then fled from Austria to Spain with the child. There, Hamer treated the child using his method. The tumour continued to grow. After negotiations, the parents were persuaded to return Olivia. By now the tumour weighed several kilograms. The child was finally given emergency medical treatment by court order, against the parents' wishes. Her parents are convinced to this day that Olivia does not owe her survival to conventional medical treatment.

Theory

Hamer developed the theory of the «Iron Rule of Cancer» after he suffered a cruel stroke of fate which was rapidly followed by cancer. His basic premise is that the sudden and unforeseen onset of emotional conflict leads to cancer. He asserts that cancers can be cured if the conflict is successfully resolved. Other forms of treatment are stated to be unnecessary.

Hamer believes that the sudden shock-like onset of unforeseen (and overwhelming) emotional conflict leads to a «Dirk-Hamer-Syndrome» (DHS), which immediately produces a «cancer or cancer equivalent in an organ». He postulates that every emotional process will take place synchronously in the brain, in the «organic brain» and in the organ. He adds that the tumours are allegedly controlled by the part of the brain that is ontogenetically connected with the organ in question; Hamer calls this the «ontogenetic system of tumours». Analogously, the tumours are said to be broken down according to the «ontogenetically induced microbial system», either by viruses, bacteria and/or by fungi.

In the brain, the conflict is said to give rise to the development of a «Hamer focus». By this, Hamer means configurations in CT brain scans which are shaped like a shooting target. He claims that the locations of the Hamer foci and their degree of severity are correlated with the organs affected, the underlying conflict and the phase of the conflict.

The «DHS», it is said, should be regarded as an opportunity to understand that the cancerous tumour is «only a relatively harmless measure of the severity of the real illness in the psyche and the brain»; if the conflict can be successfully resolved, the patients will survive, and the healing will occur in stages. Otherwise, it is stated, the disease will progress or they will die.

Hamer's full theory is highly complex; as well as the nature and severity of one or more conflicts, occurring in identical or non-identical phases, the patient's right- or left-handedness also plays a part. As in conditioning, it is said that more immediate concomitant circumstances – such as smells, places, etc. at the moment of the «DHS» – would virtually be able to reactivate the conflict in similar situations.

Hamer uses a nomenclature of his own. For example, he diagnoses an «absence with involvement of the periosteum», or a «coronary vein intima ulcera epilepsy». Hamer describes the allegedly underlying conflicts as, for example, a «smell-fear» conflict, an «attack on the heart» conflict, a conflict of «resistance», etc. According to Hamer, there is no «more logical and magnificent system in the whole of medicine and biology than the phenomenon of cancer».

Claims by the inventor

Hamer claims that existing medical explanations and theories are wrong on many points. The «New Medicine» has «set absolutely new standards which are actually verifiable». He also asserts that practically all illnesses are either cancers or «cancer equivalents».

The death rate from cancer, he says, would be only 2–5%, «... if it was treated by intelligent doctors and nurses according to the criteria of the New Medicine». Hamer deplors what he alleges to be the unnecessary torture to death of patients by scientific medicine, stating that this is the case for 98% of all patients. «Nowadays, most people with cancer die from the effects of the medical diagnosis and prognosis. It is the diagnoses and prognoses which produce the supposed metastases. They are the causes of new biological conflicts.»

In a paper on the «New Medicine», it is mentioned that lung cancer is not caused by smoking, but by a «mortal fear conflict» or a «territorial fear conflict». Hamer also claims that real brain tumours do not exist and what neuroradiologists would describe as brain tumours or metastases are in fact various stages in the course of a Hamer focus.

Studies and tests

No case of a cure of a cancer patient by Hamer's method has yet been published in medical literature. Neither have any studies to this effect been published in the specialised press.

The «Hamer foci» on the CT images in Hamer's books have been identified by radiological experts as typical artefacts produced by the radiological device which can appear in a poor-quality CT scan.

«Spiegel» magazine reports an investigation by the authorities in Germany, stating that out of 50 cancer patients who have passed through Hamer's care only seven have survived.

The numerous case reports in Hamer's books, often described in highly empathetic fashion, lack the additional data that are essential for medical assessment, and the cures described must therefore be subject to doubt.

Hamer and his supporters repeatedly refer to the numerous investigations of his hypotheses at medical conferences in which, they say, the theory was verified on the basis of cases involving patients. The confirmations presented at such conferences are scientifically unconvincing, because essential data on the process are lacking. Supporters of the «New Medicine» also emphasize the confirmation by three representatives of Trnava University (Slovakia), but this is meaningless without the appropriate data.

Possible consequences of the «New Medicine»

Patients who rely exclusively on the method of cancer treatment propagated by Hamer risk losing valuable time. Hamer also stirs up fears of drugs and treatments based on medical science.

He advises against chemotherapy or radiotherapy, and he does not advise surgery or biopsy if a brain tumour is suspected.

In a paper introducing the «New Medicine», it is suggested that a tumour in the conflict phase should only be operated on «if it is pressing on a vital nerve, an artery, or a supply or excretion vessel ...». Drugs are stated to be necessary in only 10% of all cases. They would, it is further stated, prolong the healing phase or interrupt natural healing.

Pain, Hamer believes, should not be treated. According to the protagonists of the method, no opiates or opiate derivatives should be administered as far as possible if the chances of a cure are not to be practically eliminated. This could cause patients to endure extreme cancer pain unnecessarily on the assumption that this is necessary for a cure.

Moreover, if the cancer progresses, patients could suffer feelings of failure or guilt, because the Hamer method of «New Medicine» presumes that the cure for cancer depends upon the patients' resolving their personal conflicts. This could give rise to the erroneous assumption that the disease will progress if they do not make a large enough contribution towards the resolution of their conflicts, or if they do not follow the proper procedure.

Treatment

At the treatment sessions, it is stated, efforts are made to find the alleged underlying conflict. Depending on the case, this could take anything from ten minutes to several hours. For most patients, the treatment would require only a single session.

Providers

The best-known representatives of Hamer's hypotheses in Switzerland are Harald Baumann and Arlette Büchel (Herisau). The «Centre for New Medicine» in Burgau, Austria, was closed in 1996. Hamer now lives in Spain.

Legal position

In 1986 Hamer lost his approbation in Germany. In Switzerland, alternative practitioners are neither allowed to order nor to carry out radiographs or CT scans.

SCAC's summary

We believe that the method promoted by Hamer is dangerous, especially as it lulls the patients into a false sense of security so that they are deprived of other effective treatments. As long as Hamer fails to present any more convincing evidence for his hypotheses, and while the efficacy of the «New Medicine» remains scientifically unproven, we must strongly advise against his method.

In many respects, the theory of the «New Medicine» contradicts the findings of scientific medicine, not only in terms of the aetiology and diagnosis of cancers but also regarding the course and treatment of the illness.

Further information and references

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Editor Swiss Cancer League
Effingerstrasse 40, PO Box 8219, 3001 Berne, Switzerland
Phone +41 31 389 91 00, Fax +41 31 389 91 60
E-Mail: info@swisscancer.ch
www.swisscancer.ch

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