

Six letters

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Would you find it hard to believe that a six letter word is capable of instilling the most intense, unimaginable terror to the human heart? It is able to stop both one's breath and mind. Capable of making one stand, like the idiotic proverbial deer in headlights, waiting for a six letter word to run them over with the force of a thousand pound truck: Cancer. Leukemia is a disease characterized by the formation of abnormal numbers of white blood cells, for which no definite cure has been found.

Leukemia is also a condition characterized by the conversion of normal blood-forming cells into abnormal white blood cells whose unreserved growth overwhelms and replaces normal bone marrow and blood cells. The name Leukemia is derived from the normal cell in which they begin, such as Lymphocyte Leukemia. This is where a Lymphocyte cell is changed into a Leukemia cell. a different example of Leukemia is Myelocytic or Granulocytic Leukemia. This appears when a Myelocytic cell is transformed into a Leukemia cell. Different Leukemia' are located under the microscope by how much protein they contain.

These Leukemia' are usually very severe and need treatment right away. The present commonness of new cases per year in the United States is about 25 to 100, 000 persons. The jeopardy to the patient lays in the growth of these abnormal white cells, which hamper the growth of the red blood cells, normal white blood cells, and the blood platelets. The uninhibited growth of the abnormal white cells produces a trend to unstop bleeding, raising the risk of getting serious infection in wounds, and a very small possibility of obstruction in the blood vessels. Treatment of these Leukemia' includes

chemotherapy with alkalifying agents, or anti-metabodies that contain the growth of abnormal white cells.

A further treatment of some kind would be an x-ray or an administration of radioactive substances (or radio phosphorus) may be used. Post-treatment these diseases could last for many years, but it the entire thing really depends on the age of the person diagnosed, what kind, along with what advancement of Leukemia. Leukemia does play a vital part in how that entity reacts to any treatment. In general, the older the person is the less response he may have to treatment. Leukemia in Animals white blood cells is much less common as Leukemia in humans' white blood cells.

Today's treatment mostly includes chemotherapy and/or bone marrow transplantation supportive care, where transfusions of blood components and prompt treatment of complicating infections, is imperative. 90% of children with Acute Lymphocyte Leukemia have received chemotherapy and about half of these children have been fully cured of Leukemia. Treatment of AML or Acute Myeolcytic Leukemia is not as successful, but has been improving more and more throughout the 1990's. Scientists that study the origin of Leukemia have not had very much success lately. Great doses of x-rays can increase the growth of Leukemia. While chemicals, such as Benzene, may amplify the possibility of getting Leukemia.

Scientists have tried experiments on Leukemia in animals by transmitting RNA into the body of an animal. Interpretation of these results in relation with human Leukemia is very guarded at this time. Studies have also suggested that family history, race, genetic factors, and geography may play

some part in influencing the rate of growth of Leukemia. Stewart Alsop is an example of Acute Myeloblastic Leukemia, or AML. On the day of July 27, 1971 Stewart was told of some doctors suspicions with his bone marrow test.

He was informed by his doctor in Georgetown that his marrow slides looked so odd that he had brought in other doctors to inspect the test and they could not come to an agreement. So they all suggested that he take another exam. The second test was known to be “hypo-cellular”, meaning that it had very few cells of any sort, normal or abnormal. The Georgetown doctors counted about forty-four percent of his cells were abnormal and, he added, that he later discovered that “They were ugly-looking cells.” Most of them looked like Acute Myeloblastic Leukemia cells, but not all. Some of them looked like the cells of another kind of Leukemia called Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia, and still some of them looked like the cells of yet another kind of bone marrow cancer, not a Leukemia, that is called Dysproteinaemia.

And even the Myeloblastic cells didn't look exactly like Myeloblastic cells should look. Stewart has been treated with chemotherapy and is still living today but he doesn't have very much longer to live. Then there is the case of Sadako Sasasaki was born in Japan in the year of 1943 she died twelve years later in the year of 1955 of Leukemia. She is immortalized in the book Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes, which is surprisingly an extraordinarily true story. Sadako was in Hiroshima when the United States Air Force dropped an atomic bomb on that city in an attempt to end World War II. She was only two years old when this had happened.

Ten years later, Sasaski had been diagnosed with Leukemia as a result of radiation from the bomb. Susaski had a wish to fold a thousand paper cranes before she died. Since it only took a few months for her to die and she was only twelve, she never finished. Sasaski died on October 25, 1955. But, because Sasaski was very much loved by all of her classmates, after she died, her classmates folded the remaining 356 paper cranes to be buried with her other 644. In summary to what I have learned about Leukemia: it is a very painful disease.

The people with Leukemia suffer and extraordinary amount of pain throughout the disease and during treatment, even if they are eventually cured. The treatment it took to get there was often excruciating. Studies of Leukemia have often helped a lot of people to be cured but there are still others suffering due to no actual cure found to help them. I'm sure, like all other cures needed, the money is short funded for the research that cost so very much. But maybe someday soon, we hope, they will find a cure for all kinds of Cancer.