



Radiation Oncology Centre of Jamaica

Newsletter

Bulletin 6 August 2010

CANCER OF THE STOMACH An ROCJ Case Study

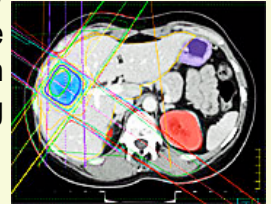
Ronald Gabon* is a 65 year old gentleman who presented with a seven month history of recurrent attacks of severe indigestion.

A barium meal radiological examination revealed an irregular lesion obstructing the pyloric antrum of the stomach. Subsequently gastroscopy confirmed an obstructing clinically malignant pyloric channel stomach ulcer. A biopsy was also done which was positive for cancer.

He underwent a radical distal gastrectomy in January 2009. Histology revealed this to be a gastric adenocarcinoma. He was then referred to the Radiation Oncology Centre of Jamaica, ROCJ, for radiation treatment.

Following consultations with ROCJ's radiation oncologist, his CT simulation was performed by the radiation therapist

and his treatment was planned by the medical physicist to target the tumour bed and surrounding lymph nodes, while sparing surrounding organs.



Mr. Gabon received a total dose of 45 Gray, which was administered in 25 daily treatments (over a period of five weeks) using a 3D conformal radiotherapy technique. Concurrent chemotherapy was also administered over this period.

During treatment his weight, nutrition and hydration status CBC and electrolytes were monitored. He tolerated chemoradiation well but lost a total of seven pounds during radiation.

He was last seen in April 2010 and MDCT scans of his chest, abdomen and pelvis revealed no evidence of recurrence.

*Name changed to protect identity



Dr. Belinda Morrison

Drs. Aiken & Morrison Join ROCJ Brachytherapy Team



Dr. William "Bill" Aiken

Dr. William Aiken and Dr. Belinda Morrison, urologists, are the two latest additions to the ROCJ Brachytherapy Team. The two specialists recently began performing the procedure for their patients and are being assisted by Dr. Robert Wan, a long time member of the ROCJ Brachytherapy Team.

Dr. Collie Miller, Managing Director of ROCJ says he was happy that the doctors came on board following the brachytherapy training session which was put on in March 2010. Dr. Thomas Shanahan, Clinical Professor in Urology and Radiation Oncology at the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine in Springfield, conducted the two day training programme.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS **ON CANCER OF THE STOMACH**

What are the causes of stomach cancer?

Several factors can influence the development of stomach cancer among them are: history of pernicious anaemia; a diet high in salt with a low intake of fruits and vegetables; cigarette smoking and illnesses such as Helicobacter pylori infection, Gastritis and intestinal metaplasia.



What are the symptoms of stomach cancer?

Stomach cancer often does not have symptoms in the early stages, or they can be vague and non-specific -- such as nausea or

weight loss. Also, there is no single symptom that exactly pinpoints stomach cancer, therefore further evaluation and testing is required for a diagnosis. Among the most common symptoms however are: blood in the stool; persistent abdominal pain and discomfort; persistent nausea and/or vomiting; loss of appetite; abdominal bloating; changes in bowel habits; feeling excessively tired; losing weight without trying.

When is radiation therapy recommended for treating stomach cancer?

Radiation therapy with concurrent chemotherapy can be used before surgery (neoadjuvant radiation) to shrink a stomach tumour so it's more easily removed. Radiation therapy with concurrent chemotherapy can also be used after surgery (adjuvant radiation) to eradicate residual cancer cells in the gastric bed. In

cases of advanced cancer, radiation therapy may be used to relieve side effects caused by a large tumor.

How is the procedure performed?

Radiation therapy uses high-powered beams of energy to kill cancer cells. The energy beams come from a machine that moves around you as you lie on a table. At the ROCJ the Linear Accelerator machine is used.

How long is the treatment?

Treatments are usually 5 days a week for 5-6 weeks.

What are the side effects of the therapy?

Patients who receive radiation to the abdomen may have nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. The oncologist will prescribe medication or suggest dietary changes to relieve these problems. All patients receiving treatment at ROCJ have two consultations with a nutritionist during the course of their treatment.

The skin in the treated area may become red, dry, tender, and itchy. Patients should avoid wearing clothes that rub; loose-fitting cotton clothes are usually best. It is important for patients to take good care of their skin during treatment, but they should not use lotions or creams without the doctor's advice.

Stomach cancer patients are likely to become very tired during radiation therapy, especially in the later weeks of treatment. Resting is important. ROCJ usually advises patients to try to stay as active as they can.



Radiation Oncology Centre of Jamaica, 1 Ripon Road, Kingston 5
Tel: 920-1823, 920-8404 Fax: 960-1359
Email: rocj@cwjamaica.com
Website: rocjamaica.com
(Copies of ROCJ Newsletters are available on our website)