

EDITORIAL

A mortalidade pelo câncer alarma a sociedade moderna! O número de óbitos, causado por ele, cresce ininterruptamente! Tem-se a impressão de que é o maior flagelo da humanidade atual, o destino obrigatório da humanidade do futuro.

O câncer constitui hoje um problema que apaixona a opinião pública. Repetem-se os casos, numa mesma evolução, quase monótona, parecendo que a molestia desafia a ciência, mostrando apenas a sua força destruidora no destino implacável, mas similar das suas vítimas.

O câncer já é responsável, entre nós, por 1/8 da mortalidade dos adultos!

o mundo assiste, atônito, o desenrolar da imensa tragédia, sentindo-se sem garantias, dada a ignorância das suas causas primeiras. E o homem lança as suas súplicas aquela mãe, que não se cansa de vela por ele, que já lhe deu tantas e tantas garantias em situações semelhantes, que já o protegeu contra inimigos encarniçados: A CIÊNCIA.

No cadinho dos laboratórios cozinha-se a droga que salvará o mundo. Junto ao leito dos já condenados assiste o clínico, mais uma vez, as fases dolorosas da mesma tragédia, pesquisando sempre, indignando, procurando um sinal revelador que será o ovo de Colombo, salvador das novas gerações. E a CIÊNCIA, analisando, na mesa de autópsia, as alterações produzidas pela molestia, perscrutando com o auxílio de lentes maravilhosas a estrutura íntima dos tecidos, ainda não deu a última palavra sobre a questão.

Porém, se não conhecemos o autor de tanta calamidade, não devemos cruzar os braços, deixando-o agir a seu bel-prazer, mas, antes, fortificar-nos, evitando, na medida do possível, as suas investidas mortíferas.

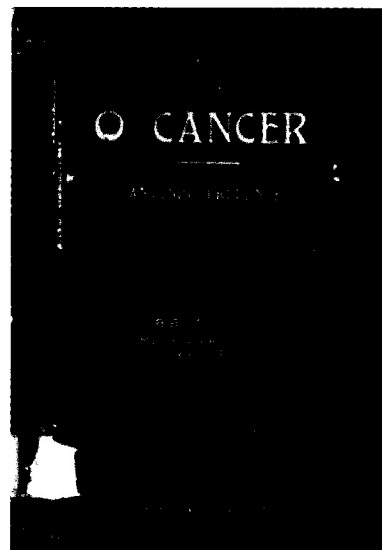
Uma das formas de defesa contra o câncer é seguramente o conhecimento, por parte dos médicos, e mesmo dos leigos, dos seus primeiros sinais, para que possa ser tratado em tempo, pois, como veremos, nas sua fase inicial o câncer é uma moléstia local.

Além disso é preciso que o povo se convença de que o câncer é uma molestia curável, desde que seja atacado nos primórdios do seu desenvolvimento.

Esses dois elementos, diagnóstico precoce e curabilidade, devem ser portanto do conhecimento de todos, o que facilitará enormemente a luta contra um mal tão difundido.

Esperamos que este pequeno livro possa ser utilizado, não só aos médicos e estudantes de medicina, como também, aos outros profissionais e aos indivíduos cultos em geral, pois, nele, além das idéias gerais básicas sobre a radiografia das localizações mais comuns do câncer, assim como gráficos representativos das sua freqüência.

Se conseguirmos com isto obter o tratamento precoce de alguns casos de câncer, por poucos que sejam, já teremos obtido uma grande vitória.



Antonio Prudente

EDITORIAL

Mortality due to cancer is distressing modern society! The number of deaths it causes grows unremittingly. One has the impression that it is the biggest scourge of now-a-days humanity, the de rigueur destiny of forthcoming humanity.

Today cancer constitutes a problem that mesmerizes public opinion. Cases replicate in the same, almost monotonous evolution. Seemingly the disease defies science manifesting only its devastating might in the unrelenting destiny, nevertheless similar of its victims.

Among us, cancer is already responsible for 1/8th of adult mortality.

The world watches aghast the unfolding of this immense tragedy, feeling unable to cope with the ignorance even of its primary causes. And man voices his entreaties to the mother that unremittingly keeps vigil over him, who has safeguarded him time and again in similar situations, that has already protected him from many fierce enemies: SCIENCE.

In the crucible of the laboratories the drug that will save the world is being brewed. At the bedside of those already fated stands the physician, once again contemplating the painful stages of the same tragedy, always researching, always probing, in quest of a revealing sign that will be the egg of Columbus, savior of the coming generations. And SCIENCE, analyzing, on the table of autopsy, the alterations produced by the disease, aided by marvelous lenses invading the intimate structure of the tissues, has yet not uttered its last word on the dilemma.

However, although we are not familiar with the author of a calamity, of such magnitude, we cannot cross our arms letting it act at its own free will, but on the contrary we must buttress ourselves avoiding, to the best of our ability, these life-threatening attacks.

One form of defense against cancer is certainly knowledge of the physicians and even of the lay persons regarding the first signs, so that it can be timely treated because, as we shall see, at its early stages cancer is a local disease.

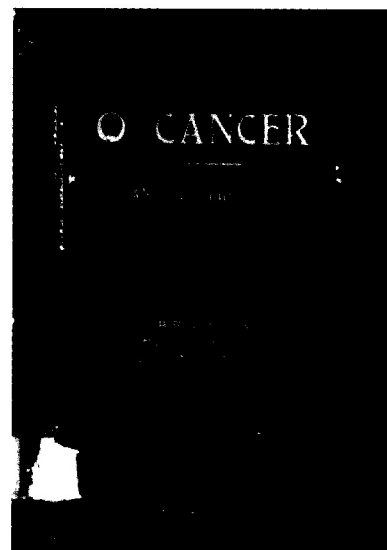
Furthermore, people have to be convinced that cancer is a manageable disease as long as it is fought at the dawning of its progress

Both elements: early diagnosis and curability must therefore be of common knowledge to all, which will greatly facilitate the battle against such a widespread evil.

We hope that this small book may be useful, not only to physicians and medical students but also to other professionals and to cultured individuals in general, because in addition to the basic overall ideas on the disease, it holds photographic and radiotherapy documentation about the more common sites of cancer, as well as representative graphs portraying its frequency.

If in doing so we achieve to bring about an early treatment of some cancer cases, few as they may be, we will have accomplished a major victory.

Back in 1939, Dr. Prudente made it clear that the fight against cancer should be based on three fundamental fronts: Early diagnostic, tumor specific treatment, and prevention. He also made it clear that such effort was not a responsibility of physicians alone and but rather, of basic researchers, paramedics, and the society as a general. This text, amazingly contemporary, is the perfect preface for this commemorative issue of Acta Oncologica, as part of the celebrations of the Hospital's 50th anniversary and Ludwig's 20th year in Brazil. Our International Symposium "How close are we from Cancer Cure?" reflects the need for a straight collaborations between basic and applied research and, more important, the urgency in putting together researchers and clinicians, in order to make a much faster translation from basic knowledge to effective products. It will be our ability to make translational research that will determine how close we are from cancer cure.



Antonio Prudente

FORWARD

On April 23rd 2003, Hospital do Câncer A.C Camargo celebrated its 50th anniversary. The editorial on this issue was written by our founder, Dr. Antonio Prudente in 1939 and, not surprisingly, it could be written again in 2003 as a much updated text. Dr. Prudente was a visionary and a physician aware of the needs for fighting cancer.

During the last 50 years, we remained faithful to the principles of Dr. Prudente and the hospital has now a solid infrastructure to cover all aspects of cancer related activities: State-of-the-art assistance to cancer patients, preventive programs, public-oriented campaigns and a very strong research program. This latter activity was greatly benefited by the opening of the Ludwig Institute of Cancer Research, on March 1983, which undertakes most of the basic research done at the Hospital.

At the hospital, cancer, as a disease, is not the central goal of our effort. Rather, cancer patients are our main focus. We want to contribute to the understanding of the disease and the molecular events that lead to oncogenesis. But, as important as the knowledge generated by pure molecular biology, translational research, clinical research and research aimed to improve quality of life of those suffering from the disease deserve equal attention at the Hospital.

Having the cancer patient in mind, we decided to organize a scientific meeting geared to answering the question that really matters for the entire society: "How close are we from cancer cure?". To answer this question we invited a group of scientists who were deeply involved in different fields of research. From the very basic knowledge of DNA repair all the way to radiotherapy. It was probably a very ambitious ideal to put together a lecture on DNA repair in yeast and computer-guided radiotherapy. But we succeeded, as we heard from many of the participants. And we shall pursue the goals highlighted during the meeting in order to get closer and closer.

We would like to thank all the invited speakers that promptly accepted our invitation for their contributions, and to all the attendees for providing a very stimulating environment. We also are grateful to S.Winter Eventos for putting the meeting together and for the superb organization.

Finally, we want to acknowledge our partners for their financial support.

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