



Most Common, Preventable, Early Diagnosable, Cancer Caused Deaths, in Women

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Abstract

Cancer remains a leading cause of death in baby boomers as well as elderly men and women [1]. There are 5 leading cancer related deaths among women which are preventable if there is early detection of genetic predisposition, early diagnosis, prompt intervention and follow up. Common cancers affecting women are breast, colorectal, endometrial, cervical, skin and ovarian cancers [2]. Out of the common cancers, the five that result in a high percent of deaths are breast cancer (15%), lung and bronchus cancer (21%), colorectal cancer (8%), pancreatic cancer (8%), uterine/ovarian cancer (8%), thyroid cancer (5%) and liver cancer (4%) [3]. Multiple factors could be root cause of cancers ranging from genetic predisposition to certain cancers, to smoking (including second-hand smoke), excessive alcohol consumption, infectious agents like human papilloma virus, noncommunicable diseases like type II diabetes, overweight/obesity, poor lifestyle choices etc. Prevention is better than cure and cancers are largely preventable, if not, diagnosed early by regular check-ups and paying close attention to signs of abnormal lumps, enlargements, pain, protrusion and in consultation with physicians to get prompt screening of abnormal findings. Surgical removal of tumors along with breast removal before onset of breast cancer could be a way to prevent death due to breast cancer [4]. It is very important to ensure health insurance coverage because the cost of treatment can be very high. It is equally important to be pro active about own health as health is wealth and kicking self-destructive habits and having a healthy lifestyle can contribute to longevity.

Keywords: Women's cancers, women's longevity, breast cancer genetic predisposition., cancer prevention, avoidable cancer deaths

A case of a woman who was the longest living cancer survivor

There are many lessons one can learn from the life of Ms Kane Tanaka, a woman from Fukuoka city, Japan, a twice cancer survivor who died on April 19, 2022 after living for 119 years following her birth in 1903 [5]. She most likely did not have genetic predisposition linked to breast cancer with inheriting the BRCA1 or BRCA2 specific gene mutations and she did not have cancer causing viral infections due to human papilloma virus (HPV), human hepatitis viruses (HBV or HCV). What is amazing is that Ms Tanaka survived surgery for pancreatic (1948) and colon cancer (2006) that says a lot about the high standard of healthcare in Japan. Having optimal on demand health care is critical for longevity and she certainly received the best and timely healthcare all through

her life. There is no indication that she was a smoker or consumed excessive alcohol. Even though she lived through 2 atomic bombs dropped in 2 cities in Japan, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, 180 miles and 90 miles respectively from Fukuoka city where she lived, it is possible that her post world war II pancreatic cancer in 1948 could have been caused by radiation. The 2006 colon cancer could have been a result of a low fiber diet without much whole grains and vegetables. She liked chocolates, Coca-Cola, cake with cream, coffee, strawberries and her home city is well known for Kakata ramen, motsu name (offal stew), mentaiko (fish roe), mizutaski (chicken hot pot) [6]. Not much red meat or foods rich in saturated fat and not a high calorie diet. Longevity is possible for any woman of any race or geographical location on earth [7] based on several

factors and a key lesson is what worked for Ms Tanaka may not work for other women finding ways to avoid cancers.

Lessons to be learned to never die from cancer

- Never take up smoking or use of tobacco products or excessive drinking. If already a smoker try all possible ways to quit.
- Always get all age-appropriate vaccines especially vaccines against human papilloma virus and hepatitis B virus.
- Get an idea of any genetic predispositions to breast cancer by getting DNA tested confidentially by genetic testing laboratories e.g. 23 and Me.
- If there are indications of genetic pre-disposition consider getting more frequently tested and determine if early surgical intervention could prevent spread of cancer.
- Have a team of physicians and specialists including oncologists to conduct annual and/or semi-annual examinations.
- Ensure healthy living through a balanced diet, exercise and intake of anti-oxidants through optimal intake of fresh fruits and vegetables especially pomegranates, tomatoes and water melon which are rich in lycopene, a proven anticancer agent.
- Get plenty of fresh air and avoid living in polluted areas with environmental pollutants from vehicles emitting high levels of carcinogens.
- Avoid consumption of foods with preservatives, synthetic dyes and carcinogens.
- Obesity should be avoided from childhood and consistently weight management has to be pursued.
- Stay up-to-date with advances in cancer science and follow CDC guidance from the CDC.gov website. Set aside time for your own health especially mothers and be proactive in getting appropriate medical attention in a timely manner.

Conclusion

Most women's cancers are curable with early diagnosis and optimal treatment.

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