This Week’s Citation Classic


The paper reported two new and excitingly different results; a quadrupling of the number of patients with Hodgkin’s disease who achieved complete remission (disappearance of all evidence of tumor) after treatment with a four drug combination (MOPP) (80% vs. 20% for single drug treatment). The second and most important observation reported was that over half of patients who had achieved complete remission had not developed recurrences with five years of followup after all treatment had been discontinued. It was one of the few papers in the cancer treatment field reported with sufficient follow time to give data on survival and relapse free survival, both of which were strikingly different from past experience. [The SCI® indicates that this paper has been cited over 390 times since 1970]

Vincent T. DeVita, Jr.
Department of Health, Education & Welfare
National Cancer Institute
Bethesda, MD 20014
March 28, 1978

“Although it doesn’t seem so now, these were all radical ideas. The intensity and duration of treatment and the use of drugs in combination were not medically sanctioned approaches to the treatment of any disease at the time. The example of the misuse of antibiotics in combination to treat infectious diseases was often cited to us as reason for not taking this approach. The results, reported in 1970, were dramatically different from those previously possible with older approaches. The article is often cited, I suppose, because the MOPP program results have since been amply confirmed and proven durable. A ten year followup report has shown that 66% of all patients who achieved remission have not developed tumor recurrences. We think these patients are rightfully considered cured of their disease. The MOPP program remains the best drug combination for treating advanced Hodgkin’s disease attesting to the validity of the principles that led to its design.”