

General Surgery UPDATE



**Cranley Surgical
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Surgical Oncology

**All the Options.
Better Care.**

Pancreatic cancer: Words that patients and physicians alike dread to hear. Unfortunately, nearly 30,000 families a year hear these words.



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NEW CHEMORADIATION PROTOCOL SHOWS PROMISE FOR INCREASING 5-YEAR PANCREATIC CANCER SURVIVAL RATES

Pancreatic adenocarcinoma may be symptomatic, presenting with jaundice, abdominal pain, or unexplained weight loss; occasionally it is completely occult until late in its disease course. The principal cause of death is spread to the liver and abdominal cavity. Until recently, pancreatic carcinoma has carried an ominous prognosis, when very limited five-year survival cures (traditionally less than 5%), even in patients in whom the disease can be removed.

Cancers located in the head of the gland can sometimes be removed surgically with a Whipple procedure (pancreaticoduodenectomy), a major surgery for most patients. The vast majority of patients with unresectable or metastatic disease die within six months of diagnosis. This heretofore futility has principally been due to the inability to reliably find the cancer prior to spread (metastasis) and the lack of effective chemotherapy treatments for this disease.

A new report has great promise for a disease which causes 30,000 deaths in the U.S each year.

Fortunately for patients and physicians, there is now a cause for hope.

Vincent Picozzi, M.D., a surgeon at the Virginia Mason Clinic, has reported a phase II study of chemoradiation for patients with resected pancreatic cancers. This protocol is for patients whose tumor has been removed and consists of postoperative radiation therapy to the pancreatic bed in combination with continuous infusion

5-Fluorouracil (CI-FU), Cisplatinium and Interferon alpha 2B.

Picozzi and colleagues have reported a series of more than 150 patients with stage III pancreatic cancers (positive lymph nodes and/or positive margins) treated with surgery and chemoradiation who had an actuarial five-year survival of 44%, a number nearly 10 times higher than what has previously been reported. This report, which is being corroborated at other medical centers currently, has great promise for a disease which has been responsible for nearly 30,000 deaths a year.

The process of clinical research to improve patient survival is ongoing for cancers in all parts of the body. We will keep you up to date about any more positive news regarding pancreatic cancer.

Dr. Guenther's patients may participate in clinical trials when patients want to seek alternative options. St. Elizabeth Medical Center currently has open and available clinical trials. The process of clinical research to improve patient survival is ongoing for cancers in all parts of the body. We will keep you up to date about any more positive news regarding pancreatic cancer or other cancers.

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Guenther in the Ohio or Kentucky office please call 513.961.4335. If you would like further information about clinical trials, please call the Cancer Care Center at 859.301.2238. All the options. Better Care.

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