

May 23, 1985

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\*\*\*\*Chemotherapy infusion pump extends life for some with colon, rectum cancer.

DALLAS--An implantable chemotherapy infusion pump can extend the lives of some patients with metastatic cancer of the colon and rectum, according to surgeon Dr. Jeffery Schouten at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Dallas.

The pump is useful for those patients whose colorectal cancer has metastasized (spread) only to the liver, as often happens with colon cancer.

"The liver is the most common site of recurrent disease from colon cancer," says Schouten, "and in many patients with metastatic colon cancer, the liver is the only detected site of recurrent disease."

Colon cancer, that is, cancer of the large bowel or the lower five or six feet of the intestine, will strike an estimated 96,000 persons in the U.S. in 1985, according to the American Cancer Society. Cancer of the rectum, the last five to six inches at the end of the colon leading to the outside of the body, will be diagnosed in approximately 42,000 new patients this year. Their combined incidence is second only to that of lung cancer.

When colorectal cancer is detected and treated in an early localized stage, the five year survival rate is 87 percent for colon cancer and 78 percent for rectal cancer. This compares with 47 percent and 38 percent respectively after the cancer has spread through the bowel wall or to lymph glands.

When colorectal cancer spreads to the liver, the average patient lives six months, says Schouten, assistant professor in the UTHSCD Department of Surgery. But with the infusion pump delivering the drug 5-fluorodeoxyuridine (FUDR), the average patient lives 12 to 18 months after cancer is detected in the liver.

Patients spend an average of 10 to 14 days in the hospital following the hour and a half operation. Most are able to return to their regular daily activities at three weeks. Refilling and flushing out the cigarette pack-size pump is done on an outpatient basis.

"Patients who opt for the pump experience minimal discomfort and say that the additional quality time is worth the inconvenience," says Schouten.

The patient is spared the ill effects of nausea and vomiting associated with total body chemotherapy since the chemotherapy is delivered directly into the liver, Schouten says. He explains that the pump is connected to a catheter placed in the hepatic artery, delivering a drug concentration four times higher than if it were given intravenously to the whole body.

The pump works on freon gas surrounding a sealed drug chamber. When the drug is injected into a reservoir under the patient's skin, the freon liquid is compressed. Then as the patient's body warms the liquid, the freon changes into a gas.



The gas then compresses the FUDR out of a separate chamber, Schouten says.

Schouten says the pump was approved by the FDA a year and a half ago and that use of the pump is no longer experimental. Tests to show the pump's safety and effectiveness were conducted by four separate scientific groups around the country.

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