

Chemotherapy Notes: →

Light in the Valley of Life

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The cancerous tissue just grows on the pylorus at the bottom of the stomach, almost blocking the digestive tract leading from the stomach to the small intestine. Food accumulates in the stomach and the pain is unbearable. That's why I went to the emergency room over a month ago and was diagnosed with stomach cancer a few days later. After that I could only eat a clear liquid diet. I am looking forward to the chemo that will start in a few days. Looking forward to the chemotherapy as soon as possible to destroy the cancerous tissue, open the stomach door, so that I can get a normal supply of nutrients.

Unexpectedly, the sky is unpredictable. This day, I accidentally drank a drink with bubbles and a few pieces of watermelon that should not be eaten. As a result, the abdomen was painful in the middle of the night, and it was useless to take painkillers. Wake up your sleeping wife and call 911. My wife reassured me, don't worry, we will find a way. I fell to my knees in pain and saw her legs shaking. The police and paramedics came and we got into the ambulance to the emergency room of a nearby hospital. Time, 3 am.

The pain of tearing

flesh made me unable to shut my mouth and kept shouting. A shot of morphine had no effect, followed by another shot, which was slightly better. CT diagnosis: gastric perforation. Need emergency surgery. I was immediately taken by ambulance to the Surgical ICU of the General Hospital in Manhattan. His wife was always by his side. She later recalled that I told her twice in Chinese in the emergency room, "I didn't expect death to come so fast."

During these hours, she has been calling friends for advice and help. There was no good solution for everyone, except for comfort, they said: Let us pray to God. The emergency room medical staff also rushed to get in touch with my gastric cancer attending physician and surgeon. Can't get in touch. No way seems to work. Had to wait for the inevitable surgery. A stomach with cancer at the bottom is like a time bomb. If you are not careful, the vulnerable parts will perforate the stomach due to inappropriate food, causing various molds in the stomach to leak into the peritoneum, causing life-threatening situations. Surgery is necessary for rescue. Once the operation was performed, the surgeon would "by the way" remove my stomach cancer. If this is done, the planned treatment plan, chemotherapy -surgery- chemotherapy, will be put on hold. It's like a train of life that was about to leave was unfortunately missed. Statistically, this will be very bad for my healing.

I was lying on the hospital bed, feeling like I was walking alone in the valley of the shadow of death ... I looked at the bright sunshine outside the window, the vibrant world, and in my

heart there was a kind of regret, gloom, inexplicable fear and confusion about the future. Am I really on a dead end? Amazingly, a few hours after I was hospitalized, the excruciating pain subsided. After one night, without any medication, my vital signs were normal. The ward doctor said you don't look like a perforated stomach. The contrast X-ray diagnostic of the day also showed that my stomach was not "leaking" at the moment. As a result, I was "released" and went home two days later. But only on a clear liquid diet.

Soon, the attending physician for gastric cancer had a video exchange with my wife and I. She said that after reading the diagnostic film of my gastric perforation, she also carefully observed the lymph nodes near my cancer with the experts, which showed that my tumor was more serious than she expected... (I didn't fully understand what she meant at the time). She thought it was a micro perforation in the stomach.

The planned treatment regimen

should be started as soon as possible. And decided to give me an immunoglobulin drug, Nivo, which was just approved by the FDA in April this year and is dedicated to gastric. This drug is also recommended by a friend who works at the FDA. I'm speechless with excitement about this better solution than the original plan. The wife reminded that there must be God's hand at work in this series of events. I burst into tears

when I heard it. I am convinced that **God's hand miraculously pulled me back from the fork in the valley of the shadow of death.**

In the days to come, the blindness and naivety of my optimism and positivity will be more indifferent. In the dead of night, I feel a vague and chaotic excitement, and a slightly reluctant expectation that is not far or near, that is my last days. Death, the last stop in life that everyone must go through, seems to be a very distant thing. In a busy life, the temptation of various desires, the endless chase, that life has to get off the last stop. Death, it seems, never has a chance to have a clear and real place in consciousness. I've actually always liked the topic of "death", it's one of the most fundamental issues in life. I even think that **all the core issues of life are tied to it. Death is like a gloomy and bottomless treasure from which those who have the heart will surely dig out the treasure of life**. Looking back, I thought about death as a bystander. It's different now, I can see it clearly. I know it's by my side because I'm walking in the valley of the shadow of death. If I'm not careful, I'll bump into it at any time.

Lying in bed, feeling the current situation of my life in the quiet darkness. I saw that I was groping my way through the dark valley of life. French printmaker Gustave Dore based on the immortal work of Dante (Dante Alighieri, The Divine Comedy) in the Renaissance. The road traveler in the middle of the road, in the darkness like the road and not the road, looks back and looks forward, with spark-like courage, and the fear of the inexplicable danger ahead, exploring and moving forward.

Gustave Dore. I carefully observe the road ahead. Occasionally there is a bleak moan from afar in the silent valley. There is also an uneasy feeling that the earth trembles slightly. I found something that seemed to be a road, and there was something disturbing hidden behind it. Some places that are intuitively believed to be a road, and they are about to enter by feeling, but the result is likely to be a dead end. I remember that when I was diagnosed with stomach cancer, I was taken by ambulance to the gastric surgery ward at the Manhattan General Hospital on the same day. The director of the surgery department and several assistants were busy with the laparoscopy surgery for gastric cancer resection, which was to be performed the next day. Although I felt that this "arranged" decision was justified, I also felt uneasy and felt that it was too fast. A couple who are doctors in the church learned about my situation when my wife asked by phone, and suggested that it is best not to do the surgery right away. I took this advice. During nearly an hour of intense discussion during which the attending doctor and his surgical partner insisted repeatedly on the operation, due to my firmness and thanks to their sincerity, they finally agreed to let me out of the hospital and wait for my final decision. That afternoon, the couple drove me to the hospital to pick me up in the most difficult traffic situation in Manhattan. The true status of the cancer often takes time to be more clearly identified. Looking back, if I did have surgery, my life would have been cut off for years.

My wife and I faced a lot of life-threatening choices with this sudden onset of cancer. And every time before a choice must be made, all parties have the opinions and reasons of experts, their own real-time reading and research and thinking after carefully distinguishing the pros and cons, friends' pertinent suggestions and live personal experience Just like in the next **life In chess, the opponent is time, that is, the god of death, which often makes people keep playing chess**. It is like trying desperately to get out of the terrifying valley of life, when suddenly there are several choices that seem to be paths at the corner, the heart that must make a choice is both excited and anxious. Now that I think about it, I realize that there is no perfect choice, but there is one in every choice. In fact, **every wise choice has something deep life wisdom in it.**

化疗手记（续）：生命幽谷中的光 | 史尔钢

Some kind-hearted friends and the attending doctor of the general hospital all believed that I had to go through a gastric tube to maintain the nutrients my body needed during chemo therapy. As a result, after being reminded by another friend who has extensive cancer medical experience, I refused to insert a gastric tube and insisted on using my natural digestive mechanism ("relying on the sky to eat" is the best), and finally survived until the bright moment when my stomach opened. What makes me more gratified is that my weight has been increasing day by day since then.

Which hospital system should I choose for my gastric cancer treatment? Manhattan, which is not far from my home, has a world-class cancer center, a medical school of a world-class university, and several well-

nod and smiles at me. Before leaving the hospital, I said goodbye to him, thumbs up in both hands, and a gleam of determined victory on his face.

A few days ago, my wife and I came to Manhattan for the third injection of chemotherapy (usually I do it at the local branch). I knew in my heart that when I came to this hospital this time, the doctor must have something to discuss with me. I was both excited and disturbed. Her first sentence when she saw me was, "Your therapeutic effect exceeded my expectations". "As for your tumor, there are signs of metastasis in the lymphatic node adjacent to the tumor in the stomach, but no metastasis has been found in the adjacent liver. To be precise, you have mild stage 4 gastric cancer. I still think there is hope for a cure. Give you a few more chemo before considering surgery."

My heart froze halfway. I feel that death is really not far away from me. The next big question is what type of tumor I have. There are basically two types of gastric cancer: one is hereditary diffuse gastric cancer (HDGC) positive for CDH1 (protein name) mutation; the second is metastatic HER2 negative. HER2 (protein name). The former has better prospects and may achieve longer progression-free survival; the latter is much worse, with an average survival of one to two years. I asked again, how long will it take to know the result? Answer, about two months. My heart hangs again. Could it be my "decision day" in two months?

With hope, confusion, anxiety and excitement, I wandered in the valley of the shadow of death. I remembered playing chess with my son a few days ago, saying that I had not played for a long time, and I forgot the rules. My son encouraged me. The exit was good, and he killed half of his son's troops with a few good moves. My "car" and "rear" are approaching his king. I was calculating how to deal the fatal blow to the opponent. However, I forgot to take care of the rear, his "car" unexpectedly froze my army.

I wonder **if life can also be seen as playing a game of chess. The opponent is time, and that is your death**. You are playing a game of chess with your own god of death, your own unprecedented life. What is the goal? In my opinion, it is you who have explored and decided step by step, and worked hard to make arrangements, and finally reached your unique survival combination step by step, your enthusiasm, talent, learning and cognitive ability, judgment and action ability. Combination, exercise your unique social function and get a deep satisfaction and pleasure from it. I think once you reach this state, you can face your own death at any time. This means that you have won the game of life. This is just my definition. The connotation and standard of winning obviously vary from person to person. Your heart and your body's 37 trillion cells will tell you if you're on the right path in life.

I was sitting in the dark, looking out the window at the stars, thinking about my life that might not be too long, and I felt really peaceful. I can always face my opponent, my death. I also hope that I can have a little more time and have the opportunity to grow into a better version of myself. Cough, human desires are endless, and time is limited. I long for the hand of God to take me out of this valley of the shadow of death.

The open Bible on the table, Psalm 23 took me to that night more than 3,000 years ago. In order to avoid the pursuit of his enemies, King David was trapped in the desert, sitting on a stone, plucking the strings of the lyre, watching the sunset, and sang the beautiful and affectionate song with faith and love for God. Poetry also truly expresses my heart:

"The LORD is my shepherd, and I shall not want. He made me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters; He revives my soul.

Guide me in the path of righteousness for my own name. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, and fear no harm, for you are with me.

Your rod, your staff, comfort me.

