

An Editor's Invitation: Cancer

Category: Cancer

written by Paul Gross | June 1, 2021

Dear *Pulse* readers,

I don't have to go far to find a personal connection to cancer.

As I write this letter, I have friends battling brain cancer and pancreatic cancer.

Other friends have fought off breast cancer, oral cancer and colon cancer.

Liposarcoma, an unusual cancer arising in fat cells, claimed one friend in his early 50s. I've lost others to more common cancers.

Cancer is all around us, and as we age it targets more of our friends and loved ones—and occasionally zeroes in on us.

Since prostate cancer has a fondness for men in my family—my father died of prostate cancer when he was eighty-nine—it's been a looming presence in my life for years.

A couple of years ago, after watching my PSA (prostate specific antigen—a blood test used to monitor prostate activity) rise over time, I got the diagnosis after a suspicious MRI and two sets of prostate biopsies.

I was lucky. The cancer seems localized and not very aggressive.

Looking ahead, my cancer journey will involve getting a PSA drawn every six months, an MRI every year-and-a-half, maybe occasional biopsies, and periodic visits with my very nice urologist, who tells me that there's a fifty-fifty chance I'll go ten years without needing aggressive treatment.

I know that some people get anxious at the thought of having a cancer percolating within, but I honestly don't give it a lot of thought.

Truth be told, I'm more concerned about aging and mortality than about the cancer. I expect to die one day *with* prostate cancer rather than *from* prostate cancer. Should the cancer take a turn for the worse, I have some faith that between blood tests, biopsies and MRIs we'll figure that out in time and act accordingly.

Again, I feel lucky. It could be so much worse.

What about you? How has cancer made its presence felt in your life or among your patients?

June's *More Voices* theme is [Cancer](#). Send us your lived experience. And while you're at it, take a look at last month's theme, [Being in the Minority](#).

For more details, visit [More Voices FAQs](#)—or go directly to the [More Voices Submission Form](#). Remember, your healthcare-related story should be 40-400 words. And no poetry, please.

Take care, and enjoy this spring.

With warm regards,

Paul Gross

Editor