Surviving State of Mind

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My project is supposed to be for someone who has cancer. I was interested in researching this type of topic because I had cancer, and my family knew absolutely nothing going into it. If there was a portfolio like the one I have created, it would have been much easier to prepare ourselves for the long journey we were forced to go on. The question that I was trying to answer was, "So now you have cancer. Where do you go from here?". The whole point of my project is to give someone who has just been diagnosed with cancer an inside view on what they are about to go through and what they should prepare themselves for.

In this project, I included the timeline of cancer because it is important for new cancer patients to realize that there might be someone older who had the same type of cancer that died, but science has come a long way in improving cancer research, so it is different for them. The timeline would reassure the patients that everything possible is being done to help them, which is something they need to hear as soon as they are diagnosed. I included the advice column because I wanted to tell the readers ideas that they need to know to make infusions easier. The top ten questions to ask your oncologist was included because many patients have no clue what to think when they are diagnosed with cancer, so they do not know what they need to ask their oncologist. Those questions were made to help them get a better understanding of what they are up against. The diary entry was created to help show both the good and bad parts of cancer. That way, the new patients will know that they need to appreciate the good days to help them push through the bad ones.

The whole point of all of the genres was to make life easier for the new patients that will be reading it. It helps them know what they should be learning about and asking questions about even when their brains are in complete shock. Cancer can be a hard thing to go through, so the new patients need all the help they can get.

Timeline

1913

- American Cancer Society was founded
  - This is a nationwide organization to end cancer. They are a nonprofit corporation that works to find a cure for cancer.

1947

- The first chemotherapy treatment was discovered
  - Sidney Farber found that aminopterin could be used to block DNA replication, which was used to cure children with acute leukemia

1957

- Alick Isaacs and Jean Lindenmann discovered interferon, which is injected intravaniously
  - This is still used today to treat kidney cancer, bladder cancer, and melanoma.

1971

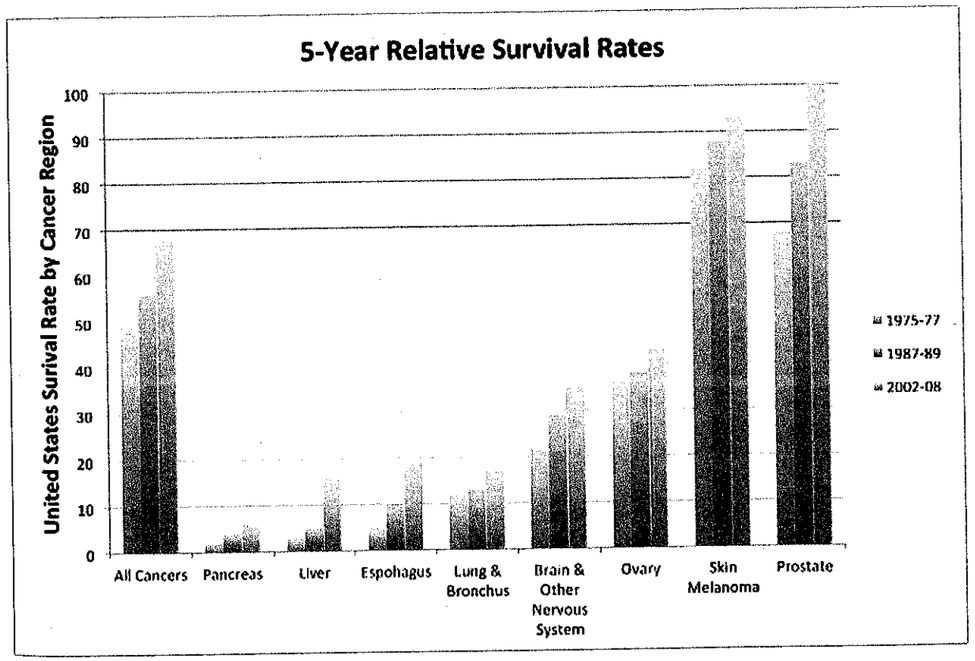
- The National Cancer Act was passed
  - This created National Cancer Institute Cancer Centers in many states, which creates more research opportunities and more publicity on cancer, leading to more possibility of a cure

2000

- Moleculary targeted therapy was successful
- These drugs are designed to fight specific tumor growth cells. This helped the fight against cancer advance because medicines were advancing into just targeting the cancer cells

2012

- The United States death rate of cancer has gone down 20%
- Between 1991 and 2009, there were over 1.2 million lives that were saved from cancer. This is from the advances in technology and medicine that have been used to fight cancer. Beneath this timeline, I have attached a chart with the 5 year survival rate of various cancers. You can see how much the rates have gone up since 1975, which is due to advances in cancer research



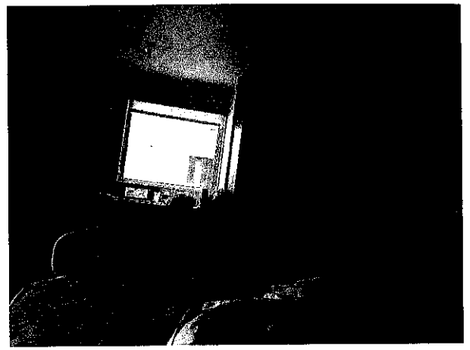
Timeline

The timeline will be about the scientific advances that were made throughout history in the fight against cancer. I will use the article from the American Cancer Society to see the basics of what the steps were, and then I will use additional articles on the American Cancer Society website to go more in depth about each step. Instead of using all of the steps from the American Cancer Society website in my timeline, I am only going to use the most important, such as when the first chemotherapy was invented and when the American Cancer Society first got funding to find a cure. From researching, I have learned about the type of drug that was first used as chemotherapy and what it fought against, the National Cancer Act that declared war on cancer, and many more. Since I am using only sites from the American Cancer Society for this timeline, I know that everything will be credible. The American Cancer Society is the largest cancer organization in the United States, causing it to be a big part of cancer history and advances in the fight against cancer, which is why I am going to include some history about the American Cancer Society in my timeline.

Advice Column

Stop. Just take a second and breathe. Everything is going to be okay. So, you just found out that you have cancer. Where do you go from here? Being diagnosed with cancer is a life changing experience that only about 40% of Americans have to go through. Even though this will most likely be the hardest fight of your life, I am here to help you get through it. I recently went through the same fight that you are currently going through if you are reading this article, so I know how it feels. I want to share a couple of tips that I used to get through the chemotherapy. First of all, keep track of your chemotherapy appointments. If you make a chart of all of the ones you have already gone through versus the ones that you have left, you will begin to see progress and that the end will come. Have something cheerful to mark off the infusions that you have already been through, such as a happy sticker, so that you will get excited and happy about finishing each one. Even though it might seem childish, have a stuffed animal or comfort item that you can take to each infusion. Surprisingly, many of the cancer patients do this, so you will not look silly for having one, and it will be there to help you get through the infusions even when you think you can't go one for one more day. In addition to having a comfort item, make sure to bring loved ones with you to the infusions. They will do a good job of cheering you up and making the appointments not seem as long. Although you will feel like you need to distance yourself from them so that they won't get sad, make sure to keep them close. They will be the ones who will take care of you when you are too sick to move and celebrate with you when you beat cancer. Lastly, don't be afraid to ask the doctors for help. They are there to make you as comfortable as possible, so if the anti-nausea medicines

aren't strong enough, tell them so that they can give you a different type. The whole chemotherapy process will not seem as long if you are on medicines to help get rid of at least some of the nausea, so it is worth it to ask. If you surround yourself with friendly



Advice Column

It is important for chemotherapy patients to get advice from others who have already been through the same path so that they know how to make it easier and not quite so miserable. Many chemotherapy patients put up advice online so that they can help others, which makes the advice column easy to get ideas for. I am going to use the Share Cancer Support website for this part of the multigenre project because on this website, there are a lot of people who have shared advice. Instead of using just one person's advice to create an advice column, I thought it would be better to combine multiple views on what a current chemotherapy patient should do. In addition to using the website, I am also going to use advice from me that I would want other people to know going into the treatment. By combining a lot of different perspectives on this topic, the advice column will be much more informative and helpful to those who need advice. I am going to include advice on what to eat, what to do, how to make it easier, and that type of thing. The research from this website will help me to create a well-rounded source of information from multiple people.

Top Ten Questions to Ask Your Oncologist

What type and stage of cancer do I have?

- This is important to know how far along your cancer is and what type it is because that will change the outcomes and treatment plans.
- The stages can be 0, 1, 2, 3, or 4. Zero means that the cancer is localized in just one place. One means that the cancer has traveled barely into surrounding tissue. Two and three mean that the cancer has spread deeply into surrounding tissue, with three being worse than four. Four means that the cancer has spread into other organs, making it the worst.

Is my cancer treatable or curable?

- You will need to know whether your cancer can be cured or not.
- Treatable cancer has to be treated with radiation instead of just chemotherapy, so it usually takes longer.

What is the survival rate of my cancer?

- You should know how many people beat your type fo cancer to know your odds of surviving through the treatment are.
- The survival rate is good to know so that you and your family can prepare yourselves in case of a bad ressult.

What will be my treatment plan?

- It is important to know the schedule that the treatment plan will be on so that you can know when to be at the hospital and how much time it will take.
- Each type of cancer has a different plan for chemotherapy, and each plan has different medicines with different amounts of time.

Who should I see to get a second opinion?

- Everybody messes up sometimes, so it is important to get a second opinion to make sure that you do have that type of cancer that your doctor diagnosed.
- Many doctors work together with other oncologists who would be able to give second opinions. Highly recommended oncologists will be more credible than just anybody

What type of drugs will be used to treat my cancer?

- Every drug will have a different reaction on each person, so you need to know what drugs you will be taking in case you are allergic to them.
- The drugs for each treatment plan are different, so there will be different ones for each type and stage of cancer. There are multiple types of chemotherapy that can have different effects, so it is important to ask for a lsit that you will need.

What are the side effects of my drugs?

- Every drug has side effects, and it is important to know what the short term and long term side effects are. Many chemotherapies cause other types of cancers, so the risk might be too great.
- While some drugs cause reactions as mild as dizziness, other drugs can cause more serious problems, such as death. If you feel that certain drugs have too great of a risk, you can talk to your doctor about alternative medicines.

How many cases of my type of cancer have you treated?

- Practice makes perfect, so it is better to go to a doctor who has already treated multiple cases of your type of cancer.
- If the doctor has not treated very many cases, you might ask if they have any recommendations of an ocologist who has treated more cases.

What is the recurrence rate of my cancer?

- Many cancers do come back, so you need to know how likely it is that yours will come back.
- Certain cancers have higher recurrence rates than others, so those that have a higher rate will have to be more closely monitored after the treatment plan is finished.

What is the five-year survival rate of my cancer?

- With low five-year survival rates, doctors will more closely monitor you after treatment.
- High five-year survival rates will not be such a big stress after the treatment since it is not likely to come back

Top Ten List

For the top ten list, I used the article from NBC News called "What Cancer Patients Need to Know" to figure out the top ten questions that cancer patients need to ask their oncologist. From the article, I read that patients should find out as much as they can about their specific type of cancer, they should get a second opinion, and patients should find out if they need to save any skin, eggs, etc. for later in life. From that combined with personal experience, I was able to create a top ten list of what cancer patients should ask their oncologist. From the tip that they should get the most information they can about their type of cancer, I created the questions "What type and stage of cancer do I have?", "Is my cancer treatable or curable?", "What is the rate of survival with my cancer?", and "What is the treatment plan that I will have to go through?". I also came up with the question "Do you recommend a doctor who can give me a second opinion?". From personal experience, I came up with the questions "What type of drugs will be used to treat my cancer?", "What are the side effects of the drugs being used?", "How many cases of my type of cancer have you already seen?", "What is the recurrence rate of my cancer?", and "What is the five-year survival rate of my cancer?". Based off of what I have been through and what I have read on the NBC News article, these are all important questions that cancer patients need to know.

Diary Entry

I know that it has been a while since I've written. I'm sorry about that. So much has happened since I last wrote, and I finally feel well enough to pick up a pen, so I wanted to go ahead and write before I get too sick again. Yesterday, I got my fourth infusion of Bleomycin. Thanks to my body, I can't do anything easily, so this was no exception. About 5 minutes after my infusion began, I started getting really itchy. By the time my oncologist got to the room, I couldn't breathe and my fingers were the size of sausages. The nurses immediately started giving me intravaneous allergy medicine, so the terror was over just as quickly as it started. Turns out that I will have to take allergy medicine every time before I get chemotherapy now so that I won't have any more allergic reactions, but apparently this is very common for cancer patients since the chemo causes your body to be allergic to more. I had to stay at the hospital overnight last night for oberservation so that the nurses would be right there if I needed help. This morning, I had to get my

monthly CT Scans done. I had to lay there in the freezing cold machine for two whole hours. I'm sure that if I look in the dictionary, that would be the definition of torture. After just a couple hours, my results came back. The cancer is gone!! It will only be a few more treatments of preventative chemotherapy and then I will be done for good! The days like today are the reasons why I keep fighting to push through the days like yesterday. My family just got here to celebrate, so that is all I have to say for now!

P.S. I saw this advertisement and just had to include it because it will remind me of my fight. I can relate so much to it because my family helped me through this.

Diary Entry

For the diary entry, I wanted to see how many cancer patients live each day and what they typically think. To do this, I researched a couple different blogs written by cancer patients. Similar to a diary entry, blog posts share the feelings of people, so I thought that I would try to incorporate many different peoples' views into my diary entry. Cancer patients, no matter how young or old, have to go through a routine every day to get their chemotherapy and stay healthy both mentally and physically. That is why I got sources from a blog about an adult women and a little girl. By providing information about more than one person, it is much easier to create a diary entry that every cancer patient will be able to relate to when they read it. I used a lot of the emotions that both of the blogs provided in order to create a more powerful diary entry. While the blog *A Day in the Life of a Cancer Patient* has a lot of thoughts and feelings, the blog from St Jude's Children's Hospital has more information about the activities that the cancer patient does each day. This provides a wide variety of opinions about a day of a cancer patient, which makes the diary entry more accurate.

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