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Early Diagnosis and Curability of Cancer through the Years

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- ca. 400 B.C., Hippocrates: Cancer of the uterus is incurable.
- ca. A.D. 350, Oribasius: Carcinoma of the uterus is incurable.
- ca. 650, Paul of Aegina: This disease (cancer of the womb) is incurable, but the condition may be ameliorated by baths, tampons, and anodynes.
- ca. 1050, Albucasis: If the cancer lies in a locality where it can be grasped *in toto*, like the mammary gland, and especially if not fully developed, operation may be attempted, although I have never been able to cure a case, nor have I known of one who has.
- ca. 1250, Guglielmo da Saliceto: Cancer of the matrix is difficult to cure.
- ca. 1350, Guy de Chauliac: Cancer must be cut out early with a knife.
- 1530, Paracelsus: Only those are incurable in whom death is present.
- 1534, Aetius: Cancer of the uterus is incurable.
- 1646, Hildanus: Carcinoma of the uterus is always incurable and lethal.
- 1761, Astruc: Cancer of the uterus is, in general, incurable; extirpation is impossible.
- 1792, Leake: Cancer of the womb is difficult to discover till far advanced by involving surrounding tissues, making removal impossible.
- 1793, Baillie: Cancer of the cervix terminates fatally.
- 1831, Duparcque: The greatest number of cancers of the uterus might be prevented if the engorgements and simple ulcerations, which are the most common origin of them, were reasonably and properly combated.
- 1908, Rodman: Whatever better results may be obtained from the operative treatment of mammary carcinoma will depend upon earlier and more accurate diagnosis rather than upon improvements in techniques or more extensive procedures.
- 1910, Da Costa: It cannot be too strongly insisted that, in the beginning, cancer (of the breast) is a local disease curable by early and radical operation, that early diagnosis should be made, and that prompt operation is imperative. The treatment is early and thorough operation; the earlier and the more thorough, the better.
- 1912, Osler: In early surgical treatment lies the only hope (for cancer of the stomach). Operated upon early, complete removal is sometimes possible.
- 1930, Lord Dawson of Penn: Over and over again, through sensitiveness and delicacy, people will delay weeks, nay months and even years, before seeing a doctor, carrying their load of anxiety, and finding, perhaps, that when they do summon courage, or by force of circumstances are driven to consult a doctor, their malady is of too long standing to be efficiently cured.
- 1940, Ewing: The high proportion of clinical cures from the modern operation has resulted largely from the earlier recognition of (breast) cancer, and the inclusion of a larger number of minute carcinomas or precancerous lesions in the operated class . . . the extent of the disease rather than the extent of the operation determines the prognosis.

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1948, Warren: Our only hope is to diagnose and treat cancer early . . . A cancer that can be readily diagnosed is one that may already be too far advanced for hope of cure; the earlier the disease, the more difficult the diagnosis and the better the prognosis.

1950, Haagensen: A woman whose disease (cancer of the breast) is attacked before axillary metastases have developed has an excellent chance not only of five-year cure but of permanent cure.

1951, Corscaden: All therapy is of secondary importance compared with early diagnosis. The end results are largely determined by the clinical extent of disease when treated . . . Early diagnosis is the most important phase of the cancer problem.

1952, Craver: Early diagnosis of malignant lymphomas and leukemias should be accomplished whenever possible . . . to detect those patients . . . that might even be curable if treated adequately in an early stage. Hodgkin's disease and lymphosarcoma . . . possibly curable if diagnosed early and treated . . .

1953, Farber: The sooner the treatment of acute leukemia is begun after the diagnosis is made, the better the chance for a long survival.

1953, Overholt: Early detection and cure rates should be higher for cancer of the lung than for any other internal cancer. Silent cancer treated promptly will almost always be found to be resectable. Immediate exploration for silent cancer has yielded a 73 per cent incidence of lesions favorable for cure.

COMING MEDICAL MEETINGS

Date	Association	City	Place
1953			
Sept. 28- Oct. 1	American Dental Association	Cleveland	Auditorium
Sept. 29- Oct. 2	American Roentgen Ray Society	Cincinnati	Netherland Plaza
Oct. 5-9	American College of Surgeons	Chicago	Conrad Hilton
Oct. 11-17	National Gastroenterological Association	San Francisco	Biltmore
Oct. 12-16	American Society of Clinical Pathologists	Chicago	Drake
Oct. 14	Rhode Island Medical Society Rhode Island Cancer Society	Providence	Miriam Hospital
Oct. 25-27	California Academy of General Practice	Coronado	Hotel del Coronado
Nov. 2-6	American Cancer Society Annual Meeting	New York	Hotel Commodore
Nov. 3-4	American Cancer Society Scientific Session: Cancer of the Lung	New York	Hotel Commodore