Cancer Cure: Soursop Shows Strong Evidence in Studies

Mrs. Anitha V. N. Asst. Professor, Medical Surgical Nursing Department, JSS College Of Nursing, Mysore.

Cancer has touched many of us in some way. Whether we know of or have overcome cancer ourselves, or know someone who has passed from it, we can all draw some form of intimate connection to the disease. The subject of cures and treatment has been of great debate within the industry as the generally accepted methods of chemotherapy and radiation come with moderately effective results and incredibly tough side effects. The search for alternative cures and treatments has been ongoing for many years. While many claim they have come up with effective ways to treat the disease, very little seriousness is put towards these claims by mainstream medicine.

One alternative treatment of cancer that has been used in the past, especially in countries where it grows well, is Soursop. A flowering evergreen tree native to tropical regions, this fruit is said to kill cancer more effectively than chemotherapy drugs and does not produce the same undesirable side effects, but may not be fully clear of any adverse effects.
The active ingredient in Soursop that is proving to be effective is called Annona muricata or Graviola. Currently it exists on the market under the brand name of Triamazon but licensing of the product is not generally accepted in all countries due to the potential profit loss for pharmaceutical companies. The long, prickly fruit comes from the graviola tree, an evergreen native to Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. It's also known as custard apple, guanabana, Brazilian paw paw and Mullanchakka in Malayalam.

Graviola is not just a cancer treatment, it has also displayed anti-parasitic, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, antirheumatic and cytotoxic properties, according to Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. In some cases, Graviola has also been used as a pain killer and the results were positive. Practitioners of herbal medicine use soursop fruit and graviola tree leaves to treat stomach ailments, fever, parasitic infections, hypertension and rheumatism. It's used as a sedative, as well.

But claims of the fruit's anti-cancer properties have attracted the most attention. A study published in the Journal of Medicinal Chemistry in 1997 suggests that soursop compounds tested on breast cancer cells in culture were more effective than chemotherapy in destroying the cells. But, without clinical trials, there is no data to support the claim.

In an assessment of Graviola, published in the December 2008 issue of the “Journal of Dietary Supplements” by U.S. researchers Lana Dvorkin-Camiel and Julia S. Whelan, multiple in-vitro studies determined that Graviola is effective against various microbial and parasitic agents. Graviola displayed specific effectiveness on parasites Leishmania braziliensis, Leishmania
panamensis, Nippostrongylus braziliensis, Artemia salina and Trichomonas vaginalis, as well as against the Herpes simplex virus.

As it relates directly to cancer, test-tube and animal research demonstrates that Graviola may be an anti-cancer agent. However, no human clinical trials have been performed as of yet. According to the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, MSKCC, Graviola extract proved to be effective against liver cancer and breast cancer cells. Naturopath Leslie Taylor, author of “The Healing Power of Rainforest Herbs,” notes that studies show Graviola has an inhibitory effect on enzyme processes in some cancer cell membranes. Graviola only destroys the affected cancer cell membranes and not those of healthy cells. This research may lend support to the herb’s traditional use against cancer.

Research done over 20 laboratory tests by one of America’s largest drug manufacturers suggests that the extracts were able to demonstrate the following:

- Effectively target and kill malignant cells in 12 types of cancer, including colon, breast, prostate, lung and pancreatic cancer.
- The tree compounds proved to be up to 10,000 times stronger in slowing the growth of cancer cells than Adriamycin, a commonly used chemotherapeutic drug
- What’s more, unlike chemotherapy, the compound extracted from the Graviola tree selectively hunts down and kills only cancer cells. It does not harm healthy cells.
References:


3. “Journal of Dietary Supplements”; Tropical American Plants in the Treatment of Infectious Diseases; Lana Dvorkin-Camiel and Julia S. Whelan; December 2008
