

Cancer survivorship in the first person: Nine years with stage IV disease

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This is a first-person account of a 61 year old surgical oncologist diagnosed with a stage IV neuroendocrine tumor (NET) of the pancreas nine years ago. This is the first patient with isolated metastases to the spleen and adrenal gland from an NET. This paper is a narrative documenting cancer survivorship over nine years of treatment in a patient with a unique perspective as patient and surgical oncologist. This patient has undergone four major operations, and six minor procedures for treatment of the primary tumor as well as recurrences in the liver, spleen and adrenal gland. The patient presented with anemia, eight years ago and was initially diagnosed by liver biopsy as having hepatoid carcinoma. Resection of the stomach, distal pancreas, spleen and colon revealed a huge left upper quadrant mass that was a pancreatic NET. Nine months later he underwent

hepatic lobectomy. Percutaneous radiofrequency ablation (RFA) was performed one year later followed by a second hepatic resection one year after that. This was followed by two more RFA sessions. A metastasis to the right adrenal gland was resected 90 months after diagnosis. The patient is now disease free, with the expectation that another recurrence will follow. This patient's complex clinical course has been described in three publications including a book chapter and two peer-reviewed papers, authored by the patient himself, about his own disease. Long term survival is not uncommon in this disease and is associated with a number of unique problems and perspectives including medical and psychosocial issues.

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