

Florida Cancer Institute

Thomas H. Tang, MD

We used to consider cancer a fatal disease. Even today, many times cancer cannot be cured once it's metastatic," offers Thomas Tang, MD. "Over the last decade, however, many new cancer medications have been introduced that can really prolong a patient's life when they are diagnosed with some types of metastatic cancer.

"For certain types of cancer, nowadays we think in terms of chronic disease: we might never cure it, but we have to keep the patient going. If we can extend the patient's life for years, and they have a good quality of life, that can make a big difference."

One good example of this, he adds, is metastatic breast cancer.

"Most breast cancer cells express estrogen receptors," observes Dr. Tang. "These are protein molecules activated by estrogen. Breast cancer cells proliferate once the estrogen binds to the receptor."

Theoretically, two hormonal approaches can be used to treat breast cancer, Dr. Tang notes: prevention of the binding between estrogen and its receptor by using antiestrogens; and reduction of estrogen

production by using *aromatase inhibitors*. Aromatase is a key enzyme in the synthesis of estrogen.

"If the patient has recurrent metastatic breast cancer, we can often extend a patient's life well beyond traditional expectancy with hormonal treatment, as well as all kinds of chemotherapy options.

"Usually these treatments are done sequentially, and we may be able to keep the patient alive for several years — not just several months. Also, quality of life will be better because of this targeted therapy."

According to Dr. Tang, "A subgroup of breast can-

cer overexpresses Her2/neu receptors, which drive the proliferation of the cancer cells. In the past, patients with Her2/neu-positive disease had much poorer prognosis. Several years ago we began the introduction of Herceptin monoclonal antibodies to target this receptor, which can prolong the patient's life dramatically. This approach totally

changed the paradigm of this particular type of breast cancer treatment. Patients receiving Herceptin have good quality of life, as it is well tolerated, with minimal acute toxicities."

Patients with metastatic colorectal cancer now have more hope as well.

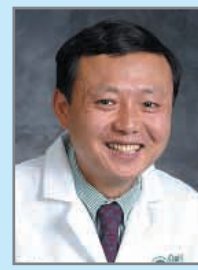
"Once the diagnosis was made, colon cancer patients historically did not survive beyond six months. Now, they can get advanced chemotherapy and can survive anywhere from a year to as long as two years with new medications at our disposal. Now we can offer patients reasonable quality of life with metastatic colon cancer.

"Also, surgeons are more aggressive with resecting the solitary metastatic disease today. For example, if colon

cancer spreads to the liver, previously there would have been little we could do to help the patient. Now the surgeon can actually resect the tumors in the liver.

"And a substantial number of patients with metastatic colorectal cancer in the liver can be cured with surgery in combination with chemotherapy."

Dr. Tang notes that ovarian cancer can also benefit



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- Fellowship, medical oncology and hematology, New York University Medical Center/ Kaplan Comprehensive Cancer Center

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from aggressive surgical debulking, or reducing the size of the tumor, followed by chemotherapy. Patients usually respond well to treatment, which can make a big difference in the quality and length of life.

Metastatic prostate cancer patients have better options now, too.

with a good quality of life.

"Finally, with the introduction of new imaging status like CT, MRI, and PET scan, cancerous tumors can be detected and treated earlier. Certainly that can make a great difference, because in general, the earlier the diagnosis and treatment, the better the outcome."

FHCN—Michael J. Sabno

Leading the charge against cancer ...

Dr. Tang welcomes calls from those interested in learning more about new cancer treatment and related topics. For further information, please call **(352) 596-1926**. Florida Cancer Institute is located at **7154 Medical Center Dr. in Spring Hill.**

Treating cancer as chronic, not terminal

The Staff of FCI invite you to visit them on the Web at www.floridacancerinstitute.us.

PROSTHETICS AND ORTHOTICS

They amputated my leg, now what?

"Anyone facing an amputation, whether of a limb, a hand, or a foot, has questions about what to expect before and after the amputation," observes Isaac Hughes, resident prosthetist with Sonlife Prosthetics and Orthotics, Inc.

"These questions run the gamut, from why amputation is necessary to how the patient will be helped to adapt to this new situation," adds Isaac's colleague, Andrew Domb, C.Ped.

To help answer these questions, Isaac and Andrew created a composite patient, "John Q.," to help those facing amputation understand what to expect.

John Q. has just finished 18 holes of golf and is walking into the clubhouse. Three and one-half years ago, John lost his leg below the knee from complications secondary to diabetes. He wears a prosthesis every day to help him accomplish his daily activities.

A prosthesis is an assistive device that replaces a body part lost to disease or traumatic accident. It can replace any portion of an extremity, such as a toe or a hand, and can even compensate for the loss of an entire leg or arm.

John's road to rehabilitation has been rewarding, but it has also been marked by tough times and some hard work.

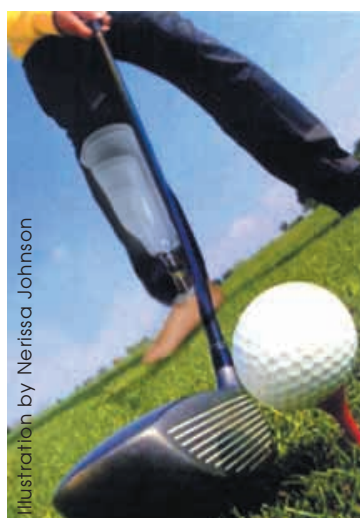
Before his amputation surgery, John had been fighting a diabetic foot ulcer for well over

a year. As the ulcer worsened, daily activities became harder to perform, and recreational activities were a luxury John could no longer afford. To help the ulcer heal, John's doctors prescribed a protective boot and a walker to reduce pressure on the ulceration. Despite their valiant efforts and those of John's care team, the decision was finally made to remove John's diseased leg below the knee.

Generally, an amputee has a comprehensive care-giving team comprising the physician, therapist(s), and prosthetist who work together to maximize each patient's potential. This team approach is essential because each discipline covers different areas of care. The physician is the lead in providing overall patient care and

maintaining the care plan. Therapy includes, but is not limited to, physical therapy and occupational therapy and helps overcome weakness by strengthening muscles and increasing range of motion. The prosthetist is responsible for the design and fabrication of the prosthetic device, as well as how it fits and functions.

Shortly after surgery, John was visited by his prosthetist



to assess his physical state and his goals for functioning with a prosthetic leg.

This information is used by the prosthetist in determining the most appropriate components for the prosthesis. The prosthetist, working under a doctor's prescription, fits the patient's "shrinkers." A shrinker is used to reduce swelling in the amputated limb. The prosthetist monitors the size of the limb weekly until the fluid volume in the limb is stabilized.

Once stabilization is achieved, a cast is taken to begin

the fabrication of the prosthesis. A test socket (the residual limb rests in the socket) will be fabricated to evaluate the areas of pressure within the socket. Then, a final socket will be created so the prosthesis will be able to restore the patient's limb function. While the patient adapts to the prosthesis, the prosthetist will conduct multiple visits with the patient to ensure proper fit and alignment. As the patient's residual limb matures, natural changes in limb volume and shape will require fabrication of a new prosthesis. This process will be repeated as necessary.

Three and one-half years have passed since John's amputation, and John is very active once again. He works part time and enjoys golfing twice a week. His prosthesis

INSPIRED SOLUTIONS

At Sonlife Prosthetics and Orthotics, caring professionals put their years of experience to work for you. To learn more about their full range of prosthetic and orthotic services, please call or visit one of their offices.

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has not hindered him. Rather, it has enhanced his life.

FHCN—Billie S. Noakes

"Loss of a limb is a traumatic event," observes Isaac, "but it is not the end of the world. A well-crafted prosthesis can mean the beginning of a new, active life."

"If anyone has questions about the fitting or use of prostheses, we invite them to contact Sonlife Prosthetics and Orthotics," offers Andrew. "We will be happy to schedule a free consultation to discuss the socket, suspension system, and foot component that may be right for them."

Please send me additional information about Sonlife Prosthetics and Orthotics.

Name _____

Address _____

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Mail to: Sonlife Prosthetics and Orthotics, Inc., 6111 Deltona Blvd., Spring Hill, FL 34606