Short Communication

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Expatriating Rogue Cells

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ABSTRACT

Abbreviations: CECSS: Closed Ecological Cell Support System

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The human body is essentially a 'closed ecological cell support system' (CECSS)*- the closure having taken place millions of years ago as single cells gradually organized into a multicellular state undoubtedly conferring, upon the organisms thus formed, tremendous advantages in the arena of natural selection. This had a considerable price: the total subjugation of cells to the highly integrated homeostatic control that is essential for the health and survival of the organism as a whole. Viewed from this perspective, cancer is 'dissidence', and cancer cells are the 'dissidents'. The single most significant characteristic that sets cancer apart from all other diseases is that cancer cells themselves are actually healthy and robust when considered individually. Their survivability outside the organisms is much greater than that of normal human cells, as HeLa** cells would attest. Thus ironically the 'liberation' or `immortality' of cells in a closed ecological system (multicellular organism) would portend its demise. A novel approach to the treatment of cancer may therefore be `extrapolated' from the way dissidence has been dealt with in societies. So far, almost all sorts of political management of dissidence have had their parallels in the medical treatment of cancer; mechanical extermination: cancer surgery, burning at the stake: thermal destruction of cancer cells, brainwashing: hormonal therapy and genetic manipulation, gassing: chemotherapy, and last but not least, bombing with nuclear devices: radiotherapy. Because the human body is a `CECSS', there remain two modalities of management of dissidence in society that so far have had no parallels in the treatment of cancer in humans: Imprisonment (house arrest?)*** and banishment or, to sound less harsh, emigration. Where could cancer cells from a human body emigrate? That is the big question we have to answer before we could embark on applying this novel approach to cancer therapy. For human dissidents and criminals of yore huge continents and islands were available (America, Australia) where some were banished, but where the hulk of persecuted people voluntarily emigrated, thus solving their own problem and the problem of their intolerant hosts. To apply a similar procedure to cancer, you have to open up the human body ecologically as it were. Once the ecosystem of the body is opened up successfully, a wholly new and uncharted fertile territory for research would pop up, regardless of the behavior of cancer cells in that situation, though our wish would be that they 'voluntarily' and `peacefully' leave the body, i.e. emigrate. Cancer cells are mobile and it is mainly by metastasis that they eventually kill their hosts. It is not totally inconceivable that once they enter the blood stream they may choose to seed outside the human body. Who knows? How do we go about opening up a closed ecosystem (organ-ism) without killing it? The procedure itself is very simple but it is the maintenance of the extracorporeal medium to which the ecosystem is to be connected that would present the greatest obstacle, which I nonetheless believe could eventually be overcome. The essence of the concept is that the vascular system of

the organism be in continuity with an extracorporeal system simulating the properties of blood and the extracellular fluid. To open up the ecosystem of a rat, for example, it would have to stay submerged in a tank that contained the sterile fluid simulating the properties of blood with all the necessary nutrients and oxygen being constantly replenished and the toxic wastes being removed or detoxified. Both its veva cavas (superior and inferior) would drain directly into the medium while the right atrium would receive a fresh supply from a slightly distant part of the medium through a catheter at the proper filling pressure of the atrium generated by a small pump.

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