

MASSIVEBIO NEWSLETTER



Managing the Complexities of a Liver Cancer Diagnosis

Liver cancer is a malignant growth in the liver. The most common type is hepatocellular carcinoma. To cope with a diagnosis, educate yourself about the disease, rely on support from loved ones, find someone to listen, and plan for end-of-life care. [PAGE 2](#)



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For Your Patients: Navigating Anxiety in Cancer Patients:
cancer.org



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Managing the Complexities of a Liver Cancer Diagnosis



What is Liver Cancer?

Liver cancer is a malignant growth that originates in the cells of the liver, a substantial organ located in the upper right segment of your abdomen, tucked beneath your diaphragm and superior to your stomach.

Various malignancies can develop in the liver. Hepatocellular carcinoma, which begins in the primary type of liver cell known as a hepatocyte, is the most prevalent. Other types of liver cancer, such as intrahepatic cholangiocarcinoma and

hepatoblastoma, are significantly less common.

Being diagnosed with a life-threatening disease such as liver cancer can be distressing. Here are a few strategies that may help you cope:

Educate Yourself:

Gain knowledge about your liver cancer. Understand your treatment options, cancer stage, and if comfortable, your prognosis. More information can lead to confidence in your treatment decisions.



Maintain Strong Relationships:

Lean on your close friends and family for support. They can offer practical help, like managing household tasks during your hospital stays, as well as emotional backing when dealing with cancer becomes overwhelming.

Find a Listening Ear:

It can be comforting to share your thoughts, hopes, and fears with a good listener. This could be a friend, family member, or even a professional counselor, medical social worker, or clergy member. Cancer survivor groups can also provide a supportive environment.

Anticipate the Unforeseen:

Contemplating end-of-life possibilities is often part of dealing with a serious illness like cancer. For some, belief in a higher power or strong faith can provide solace. Discuss with your doctor about advance directives and living wills to plan for potential end-of-life care.

Your doctor can provide information about local support groups. You can also find resources through cancer organizations like the National Cancer Institute and the American Cancer Society.



Pioneering the Future of Transplants: First Robotic Liver Transplant Conducted in the United States by Washington University Surgeons

A Breakthrough in Robotic Surgery: The First U.S. Robotic Liver Transplant

In an unprecedented medical achievement, a team of surgeons from Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, recently undertook the first-ever robotic liver transplant in the United States. The ground-breaking procedure took place in May at Barnes-Jewish Hospital.

The Patient's Remarkable Recovery: Resuming Activities in Record Time

This novel surgical approach combines the benefits of minimally invasive robotic surgery, including a less extensive incision, reduced discomfort, and accelerated recovery times, with the precision required to execute one of the most challenging abdominal operations, a liver transplant. The patient, a gentleman in his sixties diagnosed with liver cancer and cirrhosis due to hepatitis C, has made a remarkable recovery. The patient has not only resumed his regular activities but also embarked on leisure activities like golfing

and swimming just a month after the surgery, a significant improvement given that typical liver transplant patients need approximately six weeks to walk comfortably post-surgery.

The Advantage of Minimally Invasive Techniques: Robotic Surgery

Dr. Adeel Khan, the lead transplant surgeon and associate professor of surgery at the School of Medicine, recounted the surgery's success, stating, "The operation progressed without a hitch, the new liver functioned immediately, and the patient recovered without any surgical complications."

Pioneering Robotic Transplant Procedure: A Comparison to Traditional Techniques

Traditional liver transplants, deemed "open" procedures, necessitate a substantial incision just below the rib cage to extract the diseased liver and implant the healthy donor liver. Surgeons have been pushing to transition this procedure towards



a minimally invasive approach, but due to the complexity, particularly the potential for excessive bleeding and intricacy of reattaching the new liver, such a transition has been challenging. Robotic surgeries are a subtype of minimally invasive surgery, where surgeons control the robotic instruments remotely, employing joystick-like controls. High-resolution cameras offer a magnified, 3D view of the surgical field, enabling exceptionally precise manipulations beyond the capability of traditional techniques.

The Evolution of Robotic Liver Transplant: From South Korea to the U.S.

In this pioneering robotic liver transplant, surgeons utilized several half-inch keyhole incisions and a single 6-inch vertical incision, made between the abdominal muscles, for the extraction and implantation of the liver. This approach avoids cutting through abdominal muscles, promoting a quicker recovery.

The surgical procedure took just over eight hours, consistent with traditional open liver transplant timelines. As the surgical team gains familiarity with the procedure's intricacies, the duration of future robotic liver transplants is expected to decrease.

The world's first robotic liver transplant was performed in South Korea in 2021, involving a living donor's partial liver. However, this procedure was

semi-robotic, with the diseased liver removed laparoscopically and the new liver implanted robotically. Dr. Khan's team is the first to perform a fully robotic transplant involving a complete liver.

Continued Innovation and Future Outlook: Washington University's Ongoing Commitment to Robotic Surgery

Over the past five years, Washington University and Barnes-Jewish Hospital have heavily invested in robotic surgery to enhance minimally invasive surgeries and improve patient outcomes. With a successful track record of over 30 robotic kidney transplants and numerous other robotic surgeries, the team is poised to continue to revolutionize the field of transplantation.

"Our dedicated robotic transplant team is incomparable and has been key to our success," stated Dr. Khan. "With the team in place, we've been able to increase the number and complexity of cases while maintaining excellent patient outcomes. We are probably one of the very few places in the country with the support, expertise, and team to elevate robotic transplant surgery to this level."

Source:
Washington University School of Medicine



For Your Patients: Navigating Anxiety in Cancer Patients cancer.org

Anxiety and Its Impact on Cancer Patients

Anxiety, characterized by worry or fear, is common among cancer patients. This response can arise at any stage, from diagnosis to recovery or recurrence, and may even extend to family members and caregivers.

Recognizing Symptoms and Managing Anxiety

Symptoms of anxiety include worry, restlessness, and irritability. Effective communication, professional counseling, support groups, mindfulness activities, and physical activity can help manage anxiety.

Panic Attacks: An Intense Form of Anxiety

Panic attacks are severe, sudden, and can mimic symptoms of serious medical conditions. Therapy

and medication can be effective for diagnosed panic attacks.

Guidelines for Caregivers During a Panic Attack

During a panic attack, caregivers can ensure the symptoms aren't indicative of another medical problem, maintain calm, stay with the person until they recover, and seek immediate help if required. After the panic attack, encourage the person to seek treatment. Anxiety management strategies can also be beneficial for someone experiencing panic attacks. However, it's crucial not to belittle the person's fears or judge their reactions.

The American Cancer Society, a leading resource



for cancer research and support, provides these insights to aid in the understanding and management of anxiety related to cancer.

Effective communication is key: Encourage each other to express feelings and fears. Active listening and offering support without dismissing the person's emotions can be helpful. Understand that feeling sad and frustrated is normal. Seek counseling and engage in support groups, psychoeducational programs, mindfulness activities, spiritual support, deep breathing and relaxation

exercises, and physical activity to manage anxiety. Medication might be considered after a consultation with your healthcare team.

However, avoid suppressing emotions, forcing someone to talk before they're ready, blaming oneself or others for anxiety, or trying to rationalize with someone with severe anxiety. Professional help might be required in these instances.

For a more comprehensive understanding, consider exploring the American Cancer Society's resources.



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