

In Case, Your Doctor lies to You– read:

From the Oxford Don:

**Prof. Dr. Michael Gearin-Tosh (
Living Proof: A Medical Mutiny - 2003**

https://www.amazon.com/Living-Proof-Medical-Michael-Gearin-Tosh/dp/1416577513/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1469642934&sr=8-1&keywords=Living+Proof%3A+A+Medical+Mutiny

<http://orthomolecular.org/library/jom/2002/pdf/2002-v17n01-p058.pdf>

On the day this book was published I heard the author speaking on the radio and I wanted to find out more about his struggle for life. Michael Gearin-Tosh is a literary Oxford Don who was diagnosed with multiple myeloma in 1994. Instead of having the standard chemotherapy (as recommended) he eventually devised for himself a program of therapies based on different theories. His approach included diet therapy, a lot of vitamins and trace elements, coffee enemas, Chinese breathing and visualisation exercises and acupuncture. After 7 years he is still alive and stable, although the myeloma is still present. It is possible that this could have happened anyway, but at diagnosis his expected prognosis was 6-9 months without treatment. I found it both easy and compelling to read. As a nurse I find it of immense benefit to me to see a thinking man's experience of medical treatment. I was intrigued to see how he analyses the words and language that Drs use in medical consultations and journals to expose hidden meaning beneath it. I would recommend this book to anyone who is interested in reading about life experiences and choices. The book also includes an essay by Michael Gearin-Tosh about how people's temperament and attitudes to treatment can affect how well they do when treated, and a fairly technical case history of his illness.

When Michael Gearin Tosh, an Oxford Don, learned he had myeloma, a cancer with a very low survival rate, he rejected chemotherapy in favour of Gerson therapy combined with an oriental breathing exercise. This book is a moving and revealing account of how alternative therapies have helped him defy the odds and remain alive and healthy for the last 8 years. The book is controversial as some cancer specialists say it will cause patients to reject life saving chemotherapy for unproven alternatives. However, the point of the book remains valid. Whether you choose chemotherapy, surgery or an alternative approach if you put your whole being into it, mind, body and soul, you have a much greater chance of success. The mind and body are inseparably linked when it comes to healing and alternative therapies should not be dismissed as rubbish. The author is "Living Proof" that they can work, even though we are only just beginning to uncover the science behind them. This book is wonderfully written and a great read.

If you are in a state of shock after diagnosis with cancer which the books describe as "incurable" and you have no medical training, how can you possibly believe that your "temperament and instincts" are significant "when a world of zillion-dollar research sees your illness as a vast problem"? Michael Gearin-Tosh recounts how he did listen to his instincts and how, after much research, debate and consultation, he resisted the barrage of professional voices telling him to have chemotherapy.

According to the standard prognosis for his condition (multiple myeloma) chemotherapy was the only option and might give him two near-normal years, but he was likely to die in the third. That would have been 1997. In 2002 he is happily alive to publish this elegant, witty and hugely helpful book. He does not raise false hopes; he does not rubbish orthodox medicine, but he argues powerfully for the right of every person to make informed choices in medical matters. Sometimes medical intervention may be desperately urgent, but in many cases a little time for reflection and research into the options will not be damaging and might just be life-saving. The book combines the intensity and emotion of a 12-month post-diagnosis journal with reflective and practical comment written from the perspective of an eight-year survivor. Gearin-Tosh does not make claims for the strict detox regime he still follows (founded on the Gerson diet it involves fresh vegetable juices, vitamin and mineral supplements and coffee enemas, plus acupuncture and Chinese breathing exercises) and does not regard himself as "cured". All he has proved, he says, is that he is not dead. He has also shown that, for all its miracles, modern, hi-tech medicine needs to take more account of the power of the mind and the spirit.

When you are diagnosed with cancer, most "conventional" doctors will urge you to start chemotherapy (or similar treatment) at once. That's what happened to the author of this book as well. However, he choose to ask for a second, a third opinion (etc) and soon found out that for his cancer chemotherapy wouldn't heal him or that others, such as Proessor Wynder thought "If he touches chemotherapy, he's a goner." (most patients take the doctor's advice and find only later, through a process of gradual disclosure, that doctors can't prove chemotherapy really helps.)

Basically, this patient took the approach you would expect a skeptic to take, but even if you look at this case from a perspective of Evidence Based Medicine and look at the survival rates, I do agree that chemotherapy doesn't appear to be the "appealing" approach. Unfortunately, most people that "preach" skepticism are only skeptic with regards to things that are called "alternative" and do not take this healthy skeptic approach when it comes to "respected sciences" such as conventional medicine.

This book shows (again) that medicine should take a more integral perspective when thinking about healing and that more research is needed for alternative treatments.

But then, what do you expect from a medical community where even psychology is considered "unscientific" and with little of no interest for doctors.

I would have loved that my father would have read this and related books before letting chemotherapy kill him. I keep wondering what his fate would have been if he had studied the medical research as Michael did and would have considered alternatives or complements to his unsuccessful treatment. It takes more books like these to get "fair access" to "unconventional" therapies so that lay persons can at least consider that chemotherapy alone won't be enough to survive the cancer.

Other related books you might want to read: John Diamond's: "Because Cowards get cancer too" and Kenny Ausubel's "When Healing becomes a crime".

I have had this on my bookshelf, unread, for some time but as one of my sisters was recently diagnosed with cancer I decided it was time to take it down and read it. As it happens the myeloma that Gearin-Tosh had and which eventually killed him is entirely different to the sort of cancer my sister has, but nevertheless I found much to interest me in this book.

First of all, the policy of "gradual disclosure" practised by the medical profession where they drip-feed you (sorry about all the medical puns) information and tend to give you the best-case scenario without necessarily informing you of the options. Second, the policy of rushing you into treatment using chemotherapy and radiotherapy which is not necessarily going to be the best or only solution. Thirdly, the slightly bullying attitude (and bullying is a word Gearin-Tosh actually uses) that some doctors adopt.

Gearin-Tosh, as a highly intelligent man, decides to take time to weigh up the alternatives and to find out as much as he can about his disease before doing anything at all despite the anguish this causes in those nearest to him. He rejects chemotherapy and embarks on a course of combined alternative therapies which miraculously work for him and keep him alive for more than ten years after his initial diagnosis when he was given two years at most. This, by anyone's measure of success, is an incredible achievement.

I also read some time ago John Diamond's account of his cancer and the orthodox treatment he chose to follow in "C: Because Cowards get Cancer too". He utterly rejected what he called (in a follow-up book) Snake Oil treatments regarding all alternative therapies as mumbo-jumbo, or at least beyond rational understanding and therefore not valid. Just because we don't understand why something works (the placebo effect for example) doesn't mean that it is not a valid course of action.

To get back to Gearin-Tosh's book, he writes well and mostly accessibly, though I do sometimes wonder whether his emphasis on the precise use of words and language by medical professionals isn't over-attentive. He was, after all, a professor of English at Oxford University, so words were his metier and he analyses everything that is said to him to a depth that I am not sure is warranted.

Another point: Gearin-Tosh was extremely fortunate in having access (often immediate) to the best medical brains in the world through his contacts. This is not an option for most of us who have to accept what we are being told, or at least seek a

referral which could take months and delay treatment. He does not seem quite to appreciate how special his situation was and how fortunate that made him in terms of choice of cancer treatment.

Nevertheless this book certainly made me think about the language doctors use when dealing with non-medical people and the validity of other forms of treatment which may prolong life without causing the terrible side-effects that seem to be part of both chemotherapy and radiotherapy. As you will gather, I am not a medical person so this is entirely a non-specialist point of view.

Cancer. Few words conjure up as much emotion or such fervent reaction as this one. 'Living Proof' is brilliantly written and accurately presents MGT's personal experience of facing in his own body, one of the worst forms of incurable cancer. Read of his emotions, his reactions and those of other people around him, from close friends to 'renowned experts'. He is clear and concise, and given the nature of the subject and the challenges it presents to him (life or death) about as unbiased as it is possible to be.

I confess to being biased but I've never read such a well-documented account of someone who has access to the very best resources and contacts and who records his journey toward making an immense decision about which treatment to choose in such an entertaining way.

I found the first couple of chapters very difficult to read because of the emotions that emerged for me, a bone marrow transplant survivor. The author quotes another book: "Bone marrow transplant allows us to give an essentially lethal treatment ... We take out some of your own marrow, freeze it in liquid nitrogen, and when you're [very sick], we give it back. We haul you to the brink, push you a bit over, and then pull you back." (p. 30) That brought back memories I hadn't thought about for a while, and I had to put the book down for a while to compose myself. It struck me that in the early part of the book, the author was documenting everything negative he could think of regarding conventional cancer treatment as a rationalization for having not undergone that treatment himself. But having gone through the treatment myself, I have to focus on the positive aspects, though I'm well aware that there are plenty of negatives (some of which I still deal with on a daily basis).

I think the audience best suited for this book is people diagnosed with cancer who have chosen not to undergo conventional treatment; or patients leaning toward alternative treatments who are grappling with the social pressures to rely instead on conventional treatment. (It would also be useful for someone facing the same

myeloma diagnosis as the author. The medical case at the back of the book contains detail which could prove very useful to such an individual.)

As someone who considered avoiding conventional treatment but then resorted to it in the end (rather in desperation, but definitely by choice), there was an aspect of the book I found troubling. One of the reviews on the back cover described the book as the story of a man who chose his own course. On reflection, it doesn't seem to me that the author *chose* much of anything. He seemed to be stunned into inaction after his diagnosis (understandably so), and I think if not for the influence of his 'take-charge' former student Carmen Wheatley, he might have done nothing at all! She was the one who arranged all the consultations, she wrote to specialists in the US, she educated him on the availability of alternative treatments ... Perhaps the author did at some point in the process articulate his preference for pursuing an alternative mode of treatment, but such an event didn't seem to be described in the book. To me, he just seemed to go with the flow. I appreciate that the book is a simplified version of reality, but as a patient for whom choice was a big issue through treatment, I found this point irritating.

Having said all that nasty stuff :-)) let me say that in a literary sense the book is beautiful. The author takes a very difficult subject matter and describes it with eloquence. The quotes he uses, ranging from Shakespeare's works to medical transcripts, are always perfectly appropriate. And perhaps most importantly, he describes his odyssey in a format much more creative than the basic journal format so many other survivors of life-threatening disease employ.

and that message is, Don't do chemotherapy! This author consulted numerous doctors and researchers and was able to find an alternative treatment regime that enabled him to live beyond the dire predictions given to him by oncologists. If you are reading this book to seek alternatives to cancer treatment, please also include Kris Carr's, "Crazy sexy cancer" - available on both DVD and book. I only watched her movie, but the most important info I got was from the supplemental or deleted scenes - this is where you get the recipes and more in depth consultations. After surviving my husband's 2 year battle with stage IV lung cancer - he was only 44 when diagnosed and his cancer was a direct result of the radiation he received 10 years earlier for Lymphoma treatment!) - one of the greatest lessons I learned was the role of diet and cancer fighting and immune fighting supplements. Oncologists as a rule know nothing about diet and supplements, and even have false information regarding the potential problems with supplements during chemotherapy. Chemo is a poison, and weakens your bodies ability to fight cancer, colds and life in general. This book is a great reminder that despite the god like role we give our doctors, especially when we're scared to death and are seeking their help - there are options that don't weaken the body, and that just may say your life!

As someone who's had cancer, I found this book particularly wonderful for a variety of reasons. Not only do I admire Gearin-Tosh's independence and courage but I applaud the fact that he actually THINKS. And he sure can write too!

For those of us who love language, Gearin-Tosh is a particular joy. How many cancer self-help books quote Chekhov and Shaw? And G-T also cites many cancer "memoirs" by folks who had conventional treatments (and died) like Liz Tilberis and John Diamond. The citations from these books are so very moving. (I was reminded of the late Gilda Radner's story many times, the suffering and the seemingly endless chemo she endured.)

I also did what G-T did when I got my diagnosis--I reached out to everyone I knew who'd had cancer (and asked my friends to find me people to talk to) to find out how they dealt with it. I was particularly interested to know if they pursued any alternative therapies and to find out which ones. I now take many "anti-cancer" supplements and follow nutritional therapies that hopefully will discourage a recurrence of cancer. So far, so good. G-T says the cancer specialist Dr. Barlogie warns that the most important thing is not to have "a recurrence." Amen to that but I know many folks with cancer who've had chemo and radiation and experienced recurrences. If the medical profession had all the answers, there wouldn't be such a demand for books like this!! Not only does Gearin-Tosh think, write in an accessible format that's both charming and amusing, but he's a role model in courage.

In the real world, many folks do both conventional protocols and alternative protocols for a variety of conditions including cancer. Often they don't tell their doctors because the doctors are hostile, indifferent or just plain ignorant. G-T's portraits of medical people are marvelous. In a few words, he sketches an entire person. I think this book would be very helpful for doctors too. A little humility is in order. I agree with Gearin-Tosh that medical exceptions should be studied, not dismissed as mere anomalies. People get entrenched in positions. G-T never said he'd "never" go the chemo route. but he did say it was a last resort. He also says he'd be thrilled if the medical community came up with a real "cure." But given the death rates and horrific side effects of conventional therapies at the time he embarked on his journey, the choice was his to make.

The dirty secret of the medical profession is that cancer patients are guinea pigs for the most horrible therapies. And if we die from them, so what? We were going to die anyway.

A cancer diagnosis is indeed terrifying; but there's a lot to be said for empowering yourself. Hurrah for Michael Gearin-Tosh.

It was by coincidence I happened upon this wonderful book, if you believe in coincidences. The style and method of presentation of this dreadful subject of cancer was superb. To gain the perspective in writing of a person with documented access and audience to the most well respected oncology experts in the world was wonderful.

I was diagnosed with the same disease as the author had and I had taken similar steps towards health. I experienced many of the same symptoms, many of the same debilitating conversations on the rush to treatment put out by the traditional medical community. The author relied heavily on others to help him in his daily regime. In that he is fortunate. It was a stunning experience to me to find how many previous people in my life were suddenly unavailable. Suggestion: Do not ever be single and and diagnosed with cancer.

I congratulate and salute M. Gearin-Tosh for publishing an easily read book on a difficult subject. The book draws the reader to the next chapter, and on and on. His list of references is great. Check with the public library for a copy of the book (where I found mine). This is not an average book by any stretch, I am buying a copy even after having read it.

My large container of coffee is cooking on the stove Mr. Gearin-Tosh. Perhaps we can compare notes re oncology or better yet life in a few years over a cup of tea.

This is the book I have been waiting years for. Michael Gearin-Tosh describes a journey through the mazes of cancer therapies that is insightful, useful and a wonderful read. He calls the medical establishment to task and to their credit many of that community are paying attention.

Mr. Gearin-Tosh is fair, evenhanded in his warnings and praises for both allopathic and alternative modalities- again useful to someone weighing the options. And finally in the description of his case the whys and wherefores of specific foods and vitamins are outlined.

This is a great read that will save lives.

With reference to the review from William of Cincinatti, Ohio that appears elsewhere on this site.

It is heartening to hear from someone who has benefitted from a conventional medical approach to the disease of Myeloma. However, his warnings and comments about Living Proof are not only misinformed (the writer cheerfully admits that he has no intention of reading the book), they are also quite harmful. To call a book dangerous is a serious allegation. Readers of the book, however, will find that Living Proof is a memoir of a highly intelligent man who merely asked questions about the

nature of his illness and the treatment his own body was to receive. His questions led him to construct a highly personalised regime that has so far proved effective in managing his disease. He is not prescriptive and he is not trying to sell anything. He shares his experiences with the reader with candor and humour. Moreover, the book itself concludes with a well researched and sourced essay from a doctor that addresses the very issues which trouble this writer. That essay was endorsed by a qualified and reputable expert in the field of Myeloma - Dr. Robert Kyle. On the website of the Myeloma Foundation can be found another sympathetic endorsement of the book from Dr. Robert Durie. These experts do not conclude that Mr. Gearin Tosh has found a cure for myeloma but they do say that he is well worth listening to. Living Proof can offer hope and insight to anyone has an open mind. And Mr. Gearin Tosh has proved with his book that an open mind is the one thing you need when diagnosed with a serious illness.

In the debates about education we seldom hear about the primary uses of thinking. Not just figuring and scheming how to get or stay ahead, not abstract philosophical or practical problem-solving, but as tools for survival.

When, almost a decade ago, Michael Gearin-Tosh received news that he had advanced myeloma, he faced two stark choices: begin chemotherapy at once or die in a few months. As a professor of literature at Oxford University, Gearin-Tosh was accustomed to giving much less weighty matters a great deal of thought, so he hesitated. He consulted other opinions, one of whom said that any of the radical therapies would kill him. At most he would have an extra couple of years, and miserable ones at that.

After a great deal of thinking, using linguistic and etymological analysis on each shade of meaning used by doctors and others, and doing a great deal of research into unfamiliar areas, Gearin-Tosh decided against chemotherapy and undertook various alternative therapies. Some of these have been deplored by many in the medical profession and hardly any of them would have been recommended by them. Mr Gearin-Tosh has not been cured, but he is very much alive today. He is "Living Proof" of how to take charge of one's own life, instead of surrendering it helplessly to experts.

The most chilling moment of this enormously readable and gripping book comes when the patient has explored a range of unconventional therapies and goes to consult Sir David Weatherall, Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford, and one of the most eminent medical authorities in the world. He asks the expert whether he thought him mad for not following medical advice, and Sir David pauses - to think. Finally he says:

"What you must understand, Mr Gearin-Tosh, is that we know so little about how the body works."

The book is a triumph of the mind not over the body but for the body. It never preaches or makes any claims for one particular method over another. Gearin-Tosh simply describes what happened, and the process of thinking that made him into a living proof. He carefully avoids telling you, if you have been diagnosed with cancer, what to do. But he teaches you to think for yourself so that you would have a chance to save your life. And that is all that a great teacher can do.

A series of articles about *Living Proof* and its author—an Oxford English tutor “battling” myeloma through diet rather than chemotherapy—appeared recently in the *Times*. Any doctor reading them could be forgiven for prejudging Gearin-Tosh as an academic revealing nothing more than his ignorance of bell-shaped survival curves (which show that it's totally possible to live longer than the average and still not be cured). Yet one message to glean from both the press coverage and this book is that we shouldn't believe everything we read in the papers.

Living Proof is in two sections. Firstly, diary entries cover Gearin-Tosh's initial diagnosis and the turbulent year that followed. At times this sensitive, articulate man's thoughts and his interplay with an accompanying cast of friends rival journalist John Diamond's book *C: Because Cowards Get Cancer Too* (*BMJ* 1998;317:825). *Living Proof* is also a wonderful study in neurosis, and a warning to doctors about the futile cycles our hastily chosen words engender in susceptible people.

After seeking seven different medical opinions Gearin-Tosh discovers, almost by default, that he has rejected orthodoxy. The fact that he remained well throughout months of prevarication clearly influenced him retrospectively to embrace as the sole reason for his survival the “mild” alternative therapies that he had been dabbling with. (He doesn't state this explicitly, however.) Eight years of coffee enemas later he remains triumphantly alive.

In the second section, Gearin-Tosh discusses what exactly he thinks he is “living proof” of. He sidesteps some critics immediately by stating that it is not the diet's effectiveness that has been proven, but rather the “one size fits all” mentality of medicine that has been proven wrong. He argues that patients should be allowed time to try alternatives or to prove themselves “good” outliers on the survival curve before being rushed into chemotherapy.

Although the principle of giving treatment only when it is needed is sound, Gearin-Tosh's arguments are zealously impractical. For acute leukaemias and many solid tumours the sole therapeutic opportunity may be lost in delay. In addition Gearin-Tosh, perhaps not surprisingly given his background, is often wooed more by narrative than by scientific argument. Alternative practitioners are not all repressed seekers of truth and to give them *carte blanche* is naive.

Despite these faults *Living Proof*'s assertion that we should investigate those who do well and not dismiss them as quirks is undeniable. Perhaps it is the only way to replicate their successes. Setting himself up as the definitive outlier, updating his medical details regularly on a website, Gearin-Tosh's challenging “Explain me” ultimately stands out as laudable, brave, and a little awe inspiring.

Michael Gearin-Tosh, who died on July 29 aged 65, was, for 35 years, Tutor in English at St Catherine's College, Oxford, but he became famous as the author of *Living Proof - A Medical Mutiny* (2002) in which he described how he had challenged the medical establishment after he was diagnosed with myeloma - cancer of the bone marrow - in 1994 and given six months to live.

Urged to undergo chemotherapy, Gearin-Tosh examined the case with the rigour he had previously reserved for his favourite poet, Andrew Marvell. He discovered that, according to one cancer statistician, chemotherapy brought significant hope of survival to just four per cent of patients with the same cancer, and that many doctors would not prescribe it for themselves. His conclusion was simple: "Touch it, and you are a goner."

Instead he embarked on a series of "alternative" treatments. He devised an exhausting regime consisting of 12 freshly-made vegetable juices a day, high-dose vitamin injections, acupuncture, raw garlic, coffee enemas, Chinese breathing exercises and the visualisation of his immune cells attacking the tumour. Confounding the medical prognosis, he survived a further 11 years and when he did eventually die, it was from a blood infection rather than cancer.

Living Proof triggered angry responses from doctors and from patients undergoing chemotherapy. Some accused him of peddling false hopes and ignoring statistics which indicated a higher survival rate for patients given chemotherapy. "If there was anything in this stuff," wrote one consultant physician, "don't you think that the medical profession would have grasped these 'cures' with both hands years ago?" But for others Gearin-Tosh was living proof that alternative therapies do work, and that it is possible not to be dehumanised by the disease or its specialists.

Michael Gearin-Tosh was born on January 16 1940 at Nambour, Queensland, Australia, and always remained an Australian citizen. His father, a surgeon, died when Gearin-Tosh was a baby. When he was four, his mother remarried and the family moved to Scotland, where Gearin-Tosh attended Aberdeen Grammar School and then Dundee High School.

He had an unhappy relationship with his step-father, who treated him unkindly. Until the age of 11 young Michael refused to part with the small leather suitcase which he had brought with him from Australia. It contained his favourite collections of fairy tales; no one was allowed to touch it and he insisted on carrying it everywhere, ready for the journey "home".

Despite his step-father's scorn, Gearin-Tosh excelled academically; he possessed, as one colleague later put it, "a mind one only comes across very rarely". At one stage he could not decide whether to read Botany, English or Classics. In December 1957 he was elected to an open scholarship at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, which he took up after studying philosophy at St Andrews University. He was made a Tutorial Fellow at St Catherine's in 1971.

Gearin-Tosh excelled as a tutor. He did not believe in spending time on publications and finished nothing until his book *Living Proof*. He disapproved of those scholars who neglect teaching for their research. Gearin-Tosh's students were at the heart of his life. He had a genius for picking people at the entrance interview whose talent had been frustrated or overlooked in some way, and then taking them up and helping them to succeed. He enjoyed rogues: "You will really like him," he said of one student, now a film director; "he keeps guns in his room."

This commitment continued after graduation and "Michael's Mafia" - friends and successful former students with something to offer - was often roped in to help. On one occasion bemused female friends were ordered to have an outfit made up by a fashion student whom Gearin-Tosh was helping through St Martin's.

Gearin-Tosh was passionate about theatre. He was a member of the Open Space Theatre built by Thelma Holt in 1968, and frequently wrote the programme notes for her productions. He directed *Twelfth Night* at the Oxford Playhouse with many of his students in the cast; Richard Curtis played the sea captain. In 1987 he helped found the Oxford School of Drama, now one of the country's leading drama schools. He established an award in memory of a former pupil, Nick Young, which enabled students to train with London Weekend Television, and also collaborated with Thelma Holt in showcases for students at the National Theatre.

His enthusiasm led to the association of the Cameron Mackintosh Chair of Contemporary Theatre with St Catherine's, and Gearin-Tosh catered for the needs of the remarkable series of professors who occupied it: Stephen Sondheim, Arthur Miller, Richard Eyre and, most recently, Patrick Marber.

A man of generous spirit and a wicked sense of fun, Gearin-Tosh won an eclectic group of admirers, from Margaret Thatcher to Iris Murdoch and John Bayley. He is survived by his partner of 11 years, Arkadiusz Weremczuk.

Book Description: I was told I had cancer and that I must expect to die soon. Almost eight years later I still do my job and enjoy life. I have not had conventional treatment. Did my cancer simply disappear? Did I do nothing? Far from it. A number of things happened, some by accident, most by design. Michael Gearin-Tosh is diagnosed with cancer at the age of fifty-four. The doctors urge immediate treatment. He refuses. Intuitively, not on the basis of reason. But as the days pass, Gearin-Tosh

falls back on his habits as a scholar of literature. He begins to probe the experts' words and the meaning behind medical phrases. He tries to relate what each doctor says -- and does not say -- to the doctor's own temperament. And the more questions he asks, the more adamant his refusal to be hurried to treatment. The delay is a high-risk gamble. He listens to much advice, especially that of three women friends, each with a different point of view, one a doctor. They challenge him. They challenge medical advice. They challenge one another. On no occasion do they speak with one voice. He also turns to unexpected guides within his own memory and in the authors he loves, from Shakespeare and Chekhov to Jean Renoir, Arthur Miller, and Vaclav Havel. In the end, he chooses not to have chemotherapy but to combat his cancer largely through nutrition, vitamin supplements, an ancient Chinese breathing exercise with imaginative visualizations, and acupuncture. No how-to book or prescriptive health guide, "Living Proof" is a celebration of human existence and friendship, a story of how a man steers through conflicting advice, between depression and seemingly inescapable rationalism, between the medicine he rejects and the doctors he honors. Clear-eyed and unflinching, Gearin-Tosh even includes his own medical history, "The Case of the .005% Survivor"; explores general questions about cancer; and examines the role of individual temperament on medical attitudes, the choice of treatments, and, of course, survival.

In June 1994, at the age of 54, Michael Gearin-Tosh was given the diagnosis of multiple myeloma, a virulent cancer of the bone marrow. After brusquely informing him that there was no cure for his disease, and that it surely would shorten his life, the doctor told him to come back the following week to begin chemotherapy treatment. "With luck," she said, "we should have you back at work in October."

Four months of chemotherapy? the author wondered. Why such a long "treatment" for a disease that you just told me you cannot cure?

The doctor handed him a pamphlet to read at home and advised him to seek a second opinion.

The second opinion echoed the first. No cure, but start chemotherapy immediately; myeloma progresses rapidly and eats into the bone.

Gearin-Tosh, a teacher of English literature at Oxford University, refused to make haste. For one thing, he was a self-confessed procrastinator, an admirer of Queen Elizabeth I, who said she always deferred important decisions until she had mulled them over with the "hinder part" of her head.

For another, he couldn't help attending closely to language, and the language he encountered from the many experts and medical textbooks he consulted disturbed and often angered him. He heard weasel words and fudge phrases, qualifications, contradictions, obfuscations. He read statistics that chilled him, and he heard doctors play down those statistics -- before

supplying him with ominous statistics of their own. Refuse our treatment, they warned, and you will be dead in less than a year. And if he accepted treatment, he retorted, how long would he live? Nobody knows, but, um, longer. What about this statistic here that says two to three years at best? Well, that's just an average, and there could be better treatments down the road, you know. So buck up, and take your medicine.

But then another cancer expert portended the opposite. If Gearin-Tosh so much as touched chemotherapy, said Ernst Wynder, a former professor at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, he was "a goner."

What is a poor English don to do? Think with his hinder brain, ask many questions, dissect every syllable of the answers and then, in the end, take his body, his health, his life into his own cautious, obstinate hands. Gearin-Tosh refused the chemotherapy -- hence the subtitle of "Living Proof": "A Medical Mutiny" -- and chose instead to put together a semipersonalized program of Chinese breathing exercises, acupuncture, coffee and castor oil enemas, megadoses of vitamins and a diet rich in raw vegetables and fresh juices and stripped of salt, sugar and cooked fat.

Eight years after receiving his imminent-death verdict, Gearin-Tosh is very much alive. He is not cured, he admits: he remains anemic, his bones are osteoporotic, and his immune system is, in his nonspecific term, "disordered." Yet still, he is here among us, and now he has written, in a spare, wry, backhanded style reminiscent of the great English novelist Penelope Fitzgerald, the most persuasive case for alternative medicine that this skeptical, generally dismissive reader has yet come across. I don't know what I'd do if I were to come down with myeloma, and who knows whether the author's extended survival can be attributed to anything he ate, breathed or expelled; maybe he was one of the statistical outliers found in every patient population. Nevertheless, there is something to be said for challenging the use of toxic chemotherapy regimens when a cure is out of the question.

There is something to be said as well for large, ecumenical doses of skepticism, toward alternative and "mainstream" medicine alike. After all, both camps tend to exaggerate their powers, and to fall prey to the lure of the anecdote, rejecting data and studies that do not fit what they know must be true. In defense of alternative medicine, for example, Gearin-Tosh cites the much-ballyhooed work of David Spiegel, a psychiatrist at Stanford, who in 1989 published results in the journal *The Lancet* showing that breast cancer patients who attended psychological support groups lived longer than did patients who received standard medical care alone; and he expresses indignation at the *Lancet* editors who wrote a "tetchy" editorial to accompany the Spiegel study that voiced doubts about its results. Well, the *Lancet* editors were right to withhold their endorsement. Recently, a well-controlled and much larger trial failed to confirm the initial findings: breast cancer support groups, while improving the mental health of participants, do not seem to extend patients' lives.

For their part, clinicians who favor routine screening tests like mammography or prenatal ultrasound are all too ready to dismiss or revile recent studies that call the utility of their tests into question. They're doctors, by gum, and they know what's good for their patients!

Gearin-Tosh thankfully avoids the gooey, reverential tone found in many New Age testimonials. He is no proselytizer, and he does not pretend to have found the answer to cancer. He merely ended up doing what he did out of a desire to avoid doing anything really drastic, and the more he read of chemotherapy, the more drastic, and possibly fatal, the

procedure appeared. There were the dread side effects: "vomiting, 'aching veins,' hair and eyelashes falling out, saliva not produced, nails falling out . . . 'neck swelling like a sumo wrestler's . . . lips puffing out like a Ubangi warrior's.' "

Worse, he learned of the extent to which chemotherapy can devastate the immune system. Gearin-Tosh spends quite a bit of time deconstructing a friend's reference to a woman who died as a result of myeloma. "Ironically," the friend wrote, "she died not of the cancer, but of an opportunistic pneumonia, just after she had responded very successfully to treatment." Gearin-Tosh wonders, "Can there be opportunism without an opportunity?" In other words, wasn't it the "successful" chemotherapy treatment that had weakened the woman's immune system to the point where "the pneumonia got its opportunity"?

The reluctant patient began reading unorthodox approaches to treating cancer, including books like "Cancer and Leukaemia," by Dr. Jan de Vries, which recommends visualizations and "bone breathing" exercises, and "A Cancer Therapy," by Max Gerson, a program based on diet and enemas that many in the medical community consider close to crackpot. A world-renowned myeloma expert courteously but firmly tells Gearin-Tosh that "nutrition has no place in the treatment of cancer."

YET one mainstream authority refuses to ridicule his approach. When Gearin-Tosh describes to Sir David Weatherall of the Institute of Molecular Medicine in Oxford the reasoning behind his decision to reject chemotherapy, and asks whether he is crazy to try diet, acupuncture and breathing exercises instead, Sir David thinks for a minute and then says, "What you must understand, Mr. Gearin-Tosh, is that we know so little about how the body works." The author is astonished. "Blood rushes through my head," he writes. "I could be floating in air." A doctor has confessed medical fallibility. A doctor has said, your guess, and ministrations, and flailings, in this case are as good as mine.

Gearin-Tosh does not fight for his life alone. He is lucky to be surrounded by throngs of friends, colleagues, proteges who care for him, do extensive medical research, prepare his food, write letters to various authorities.

One brilliant former student, Carmen Wheatley, who is now a "consort" of a molecular biologist, becomes so versed in the science that she provides a long technical postscript that attempts to offer scientifically credible hypotheses for why Gearin-Tosh's particular program worked. Some of the banter in the book is a bit too precious, like dialogue from a late-night British sitcom. The bachelor author likes to pit his female hangers-on against one another, while placing himself as the hapless chap in the middle. But he's entitled to his small vanities and sporadic cattiness. He is the most elegant and good-humored of mutineers, and that, in the end, may be what keeps him alive.

Natalie Angier writes about science for The Times. She is working on a book about how to master the modern scientific canon.

An inspiring teacher of English literature at St Catherine's College, Oxford, for almost four decades, Michael Gearin-Tosh, who has died aged 65, also became a life-enhancing figure to a much wider public. Sadly, in 1994, he was diagnosed with myeloma, an acute form of bone marrow cancer. He refused to allow this to dampen his spirits or affect his many activities, and though the doctors gave him less than a year to live, he survived triumphantly for more than 10.

Rejecting the option of chemotherapy, Michael wrote a remarkable book about his unconventional self-treatment, entitled *Living Proof: A Medical Mutiny*, and published in 2002. The humour and high spirits of his individual approach to his illness have certainly given comfort and consolation, as well as hope and amusement, to fellow-sufferers. In the event, his death was caused by an unrelated blood infection.

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Michael was born in Nambour, Queensland, and remained an Australian citizen all his life. His father, a surgeon, died when Michael was very young, and he went, with his mother, to Scotland to pursue his education. At Aberdeen grammar school and Dundee high school, he excelled in a variety of subjects, for a long time staying uncertain whether to study botany, English or the classics at university level.

He won an open scholarship to Corpus Christi College, Oxford, in 1957, but had to postpone it, on account of his youth, until 1959, meanwhile studying philosophy at St Andrews University. He won the chancellor's English essay prize in the year of his finals, and two decades later, in 1983, added to his achievements by winning the university prize for "a poem on a sacred subject", engagingly entitled *The Drunkenness Of Noah*.

After graduating, he became a junior lecturer at Magdalen College, Oxford, and, in 1965, a research fellow at St Catherine's. For a while, he assisted Rachel Trickett, later principal of St Hugh's College, in her research, and this began a warm and enduring friendship that lasted till her death in 1999. Together, they resurrected the reputation of the poet John Oldham and his satires against the Jesuits.

Michael's own research interests at this time included William Collins and the English Augustans, Dryden, Pope and Swift. Towards the end of his life, he was working on what would have been a superb edition of Marvell had he lived to complete it.

As a young man, he had greatly impressed Dennis Horgan, his senior colleague in English at St Catherine's, who said that he possessed "intellectual strength combined with the most refined sensibility - a mind one only comes across very rarely". He was elected a tutorial fellow of St Catherine's in 1971, and served as librarian and, for a while, as domestic bursar, greatly improving the quality of college food.

From 1988 to 1990, he was vice-master of the college. He took a welfare role in acting as the university assessor (1988-89), and played a large part in the running of the English faculty.

Advertisement

Theatre was one of Michael's greatest interests. Writing and directing absorbed him, in opera as well as plays. His enthusiasm inspired others, and led to the association of St Catherine's

with the Cameron Mackintosh chair of contemporary theatre, whose visiting holders have included Peter Shaffer, Arthur Miller, Richard Eyre, Alan Ayckbourn, Stephen Sondheim, Diana Rigg and Patrick Marber. He also helped to establish an award which has since enabled many St Catherine's students to train with London Weekend Television.

Michael picked and cherished his college students with great care, and was an outstanding tutor. Many of his students became what his friend Iris Murdoch described as "pals for life". Another great friend, Professor Lord David Cecil, used to say that Michael had the gift of showing how to get the best out of the university and out of life, without taking either of them too seriously.

He is survived by his partner, Arkadiusz Weremczuk.

· Michael Brian Gearin-Tosh, academic and writer, born January 16 1940; died July 29 2005

The True Story Of Oxford Don Michael Gearin-Tosh

Book Review

Michael Gearin-Tosh is an extremely bright and lively individual.

When diagnosed with myeloma he actively sought the best way forward.

His book is both excellent and controversial. Over a six month period he found out about the options available for treatment of Myeloma including chemotherapy but in parallel became more intrigued by the Gerson Therapy and embarked on his own personal treatment plan. The Gerson Therapy is time consuming and not for everybody and it must be remembered that cancer is a very individual disease.

But Michael believed in the Gerson Therapy and this, coupled with his self-belief and natural energy, has seen him through the last eight years. All credit to him; he should be an Icon for cancer patients and his book an essential read. His book does highlight the extraordinary gulf between 'conventional' medicine and 'alternative' medicine and the success of Michael Gearin-Tosh in controlling his cancer has significant implications for us all.

Sir David Wetherall FRS, Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford University said in his letter to the Sunday Times about the book, "Though I do believe passionately in scientific medicine, I have not got to the stage of being so blinkered that I cannot believe that at least some aspects of the more complementary approach may have a lot to offer. I think they could be put to the scientific test, and should be, but whether this will happen is far from clear. But of one thing I am sure; regardless of what a patient is suffering from, their personal reaction to their situation and their state of mind is of critical importance, and to ignore them in the face of high technology and medical practice is to court disaster".

“ Nobody receives a diagnosis of even the least invasive cancer with anything but fear and dread ”

In 1994, I was diagnosed with a malignant cancer of the bone marrow, multiple myeloma. The consultant does not tell me much, but I am a Fellow of St Catherine's College in the University of Oxford, where I teach English literature. I decide to go to our library: each Oxford college includes most disciplines, and we take medical students. I find a book, Rees, Goodman and Bullimore: *Cancer in Practice* (1993) - it is still in print today as a cancer textbook. I look in the index. Myeloma is on p.193 which reads: Multiple myeloma is incurable.

The median survival time from clinical confirmation to death is under a year in untreated patients, and two to three years with treatment. Some 15% die within the first three months. Underneath there are symptoms and signs. Bone pain, pathological fracture, anaemia, symptoms of hypercalcaemia and renal failure, fever due to infection.

So here is my bone pain: I slipped a disc in 1989 that went on for months, and I am still sore if I sit for any great length of time.

And here is "fever due to infection": it was a bout of pneumonia after a trip to Moscow that led to my doctor taking the blood tests that discovered myeloma.

Cancer is a shock. Even in the chill language that oncologists use to their colleagues, and which is not intended for patients or the general public, you can read that "patients dealing with a diagnosis of myeloma are confronted with a terrifying reality". (*Malpas, Bergsagel, Kyle and Anderson, Myeloma: biology and management (2nd ed. 1998) p. 493*).

The point is also made by John Diamond who wrote "Nobody receives a diagnosis of even the least invasive cancer with anything but fear and dread"

“ It is not that I am against so-called orthodox medicine - I find the distinction one that is misleading and should be replaced ”

On top of cancer itself, this "fear and dread" is highly dangerous. It has two results. Your mind is numbed and you do not think as well as you might.

Secondly, your spirits are lowered which gives the cancer an evil boost.

In my book *Living Proof A Medical Mutiny*, I describe how five consultants, independently of each other, were urging me to start chemotherapy: if I did not, they said, the probability was that I would be dead in a year.

But a famous Professor of cancer, now in old age, told me through a friend to avoid chemotherapy. I started to explore so-called alternative treatments.

I write so-called alternative because it is often forgotten that these alternatives were devised by highly qualified and experienced doctors, qualified in orthodox medicine, and also in my case by a winner of two Nobel prizes.

My instincts were that the extremeness of many chemotherapy treatments was likely to damage the body's immune systems. Instead, I follow a series of therapies that I describe in Living Proof: A Medical Mutiny.

They involve diet, vegetable juices, vitamins and coffee enemas. It is not that I am against so-called orthodox medicine - I find the distinction one that is misleading and should be replaced. I take an advanced form of the orthodox drug bisphosphonate to protect my bones. And I am monitored by Professor Ray Powles of the Royal Marsden Hospital.

“ Multiple myeloma is incurable ”

But I am against extreme cancer treatments which have a questionable track record, and I give some attention to this matter in part 2 of Living Proof: A Medical Mutiny.

I should add that the manuscript of my book was read by some of the world's most eminent medical researchers and cancer specialists, including Professor Sir James Gowans FRS, Professor Robert Kyle of the Mayo Clinic and Professor Sir David Weatherall FRS of Oxford University. The third part of the book is a technical essay on why the so-called alternative therapies might have worked in my case.

This essay is by Carmen Wheatley and it is peer-reviewed by eminent orthodox authorities.

It is of particular interest that Professor Kyle that 'Michael GearinTosh's statement "be proof against being rushed to treatment" is a most important concept.' Carmen Wheatley and I are also thrilled that a Professor of the eminence of Dr Kyle should write that many of us are looking for more effective chemotherapeutic agents, biologic intervention, etc, but the role of the "unorthodox" therapies in this case report deserve scientific scrutiny and study.

“ Be proof against being rushed to treatment ”

Depression is the second great danger of the shock of being told you have cancer. Mind and body are closely linked in disease. I found immense help in a Chinese breathing exercise, followed by visualizations, which I discovered in Cancer and Leukemia by Jan de Vries. I then tracked down Dr de Vries and was given a consultation. He told me he had discovered the exercise while working at a country hospital in China: "it could be very ancient".

I describe in detail the exercise and results for both of us.

In summary, I have had no chemotherapy or radiation, and I continue to do my job eight years later.

For further information, please consult my website: www.gearintosh.com and the website of Carmen Wheatley, www.canceraction.org.gg how it developed, in Living Proof: A Medical Mutiny.

The inspirational book 'Living Proof' by Michael Gearin-Tosh is now available to Icon readers at the Special price of 12.99 including Post and Packing.

To order a copy of 'Living Proof' at this special price of 12.99 (inc p&p) please call: 01624 836 000 or send a cheque to: Simon & Schuster Cash Sales P0 Box 29 Douglas Isle of Man IM99 1BQ

Update

Unfortunately, Micheal Gearin-Tosh passed away on 29th July 2005, over 10 years after he was diagnosed with multiple myeloma.

He was, quite simply, an inspiration to us all. He showed everyone with cancer that you do not have to accept the status quo of orthodox medicine and its gloomy statistics. And that by being open-minded, doing your 'homework' and then being disciplined on a course of action you can give yourself seven, eight times more life expectancy than the medical world alone can offer.

But let us be clear. Here was an exceptional man, who was charming, intellegent and with a wonderful command of the English language. He chose to undertake the Gerson Therapy but not to the total exclusion of orthodox medicine, although he saw little point in taking 'poisonous drugs' that would probably only extend his life by a year or so at a cost to both his general well-being and his life style. He became a founding patron of CANCERactive and believed fervently in an integrated approach to treating cancer: The best of all that is available.

Michael Gearin-Tosh was for nearly 40 years an inspirational teacher of English literature at St Catherine's College, Oxford, and an exotic figure in the university. Three years ago he achieved wider notoriety when he published a book about his long struggle with cancer during which he relied on a gruelling regime of alternative treatments. Living Proof was attacked by some members of the medical fraternity, but welcomed by others, and it struck a deep chord with many fellow cancer sufferers.

Perhaps rather surprisingly, since he never seemed other than British, he was born in Queensland, Australia. His father, Dr Clifford Gearin, was a surgeon who died when Michael was very young. He spent much of his life looking in both men and women for the father figure he had lost. Certainly he did not find it in Captain Tosh, a Scottish gentleman farmer whom his mother now married. Michael later painted his stepfather - whose surname he was required to conjoin with that of his own father - as something of a tyrant. His favourite hiding place in the Perthshire farmhouse where they lived, he said, was the kitchen, and his firmest friend the cook.

Michael was devoted to his mother, and, as he helped around the farm, so he lent a hand with her breeding of cocker spaniels. At Aberdeen Grammar School (where Byron had studied) and Dundee High School, it became apparent that he was exceptionally clever, and at the age of 17 he won an open scholarship to Corpus Christi College, Oxford. As he was so young, he spent a year studying philosophy at St Andrews University before going up to Oxford to read English.

After his finals he became a junior lecturer at Magdalen, and in 1965 - three years after the first students came to the college - he was appointed to a research fellowship at St Catherine's. He became a tutorial fellow in 1971, and remained there for the rest of his life.

Michael Gearin-Tosh seemed set for stardom as a literary critic. A senior colleague at St Catherine's justly said of him that he "combined intellectual strength with the most refined sensibility, possessing a mind that one only comes across very rarely". The trouble was that Gearin-Tosh was a painstaking scholar who found it difficult to stop digging. In his youth he helped Rachel Trickett, Fellow of St Hugh's College, later its Principal, with her important book *The Honest Muse: a study in Augustan verse* (1967). (The two became lifelong soul mates. Trickett, who died in 1999, was his rock.) But Gearin-Tosh never produced his own academic book. A magnum opus on Andrew Marvell was eventually put aside. His admirers had to be content with short, dense, elegant articles published in learned journals.

It was as a tutor that Gearin-Tosh shone brightest. Pope, Dryden, Marvell and, of course, Shakespeare were his greatest loves. His approach, no doubt partly shaped by his Scottish upbringing, was one of close textual scholarship. Pupils were encouraged to read carefully before constructing grand theories. He was expert at spotting the able pupil who had not yet blossomed. Having sympathetically received relatively commonplace ideas, he would accompany students to more commanding heights. His purpose was not to produce future academics but men and women who would go out into the world with rigorous and curious minds.

Oxford, though, was not everything to Gearin-Tosh. He loved London. He was never happier than when heading for Florence or Rome. Russia later became a great love. Gearin-Tosh liked the company of powerful politicians, and became a perhaps rather unlikely admirer of Margaret Thatcher. He also had a passion for the theatre, and for theatre people, and co-wrote a play about the Restoration poet Lord Rochester with the writer David Ambrose. He directed several productions. When Cameron Mackintosh endowed a chair of contemporary drama at Oxford, he turned to Gearin-Tosh and St Catherine's College. Visiting professors over the years have included Peter Shaffer, Arthur Miller, Richard Eyre, Alan Ayckbourn and Patrick Marber. Lectures were often followed by dinners to which Gearin-Tosh would invite an eclectic array of guests. He brought a sense of metropolitan excitement and sparkle to Oxford.

In 1994 he was diagnosed with myeloma - cancer of the bone marrow - and told that without chemotherapy he had a few months to live. With treatment he was offered no more than two or three years. He set about finding a cure, weighing up the advantages and disadvantages of various conventional and alternative treatments.

Living Proof: a medical mutiny (2002) was his first and only book, and it is a great one - eloquent, moving and persuasive. The blocks that had impeded a substantial academic work were triumphantly removed. All Michael Gearin-Tosh's finest qualities as a man and a critic

are on display: his learning, his compassion, his rebelliousness, his scepticism (about some doctors), his dislike of pretension and pomposity, and his irrepressible sense of the absurd.

Gearin-Tosh did not want to die, though I do not think he feared death very much, and he had high hopes of God. Certainly he would not have wished to live on in any circumstances. In a sense his survival became an intellectual struggle against the medical establishment that had condemned him. Every extra day proved a point. He did not argue in his book that his regime of coffee enemas and juices would work for everyone, merely that they had worked a miracle for him. *Living Proof* was none the less embraced by many cancer sufferers; and it has made some doctors think again.

Michael Gearin-Tosh had many friends from all walks of life, and he died surrounded by some of them. One former pupil read out some poems by Marvell, complete with Gearin-Tosh's original points made gently in a tutorial 30 years ago. Another by the hospital bed was Arkadius Weremczuk, the fashion designer, and Gearin-Tosh's loyal and loving companion of nearly 11 years.

He did not, in fact, succumb to the cancer that he had held at bay so long, but from a virulent blood infection that spread alarmingly fast. This for him was a kind of victory. His last words on this earth were: "Let it go."

In Spring 1994, 54-year old Michael Gearin-Tosh was diagnosed with incurable multiple myeloma (cancer of the blood and immune system). The survival prognosis cited was bleak – anywhere from a few months to 2-3 years. Because the treatment offered – chemotherapy (Melphalan) was not a cure, and perhaps due to Mr Gearin-Tosh's pedantic and rather obstinate nature, he refused cytotoxic treatment, adopted an extremely vigorous nutritional approach, composed of the Gerson therapy, plus additional supplements, acupuncture and visualization, and is still alive today, eight years later.

Now, Michael Gearin-Tosh is no ordinary man on-the-street. He is an eminent and scholarly Oxford don of English Literature. In fact, his book outlining his cancer treatment approach is very much an entourage of the great and the good both from the orthodox and complementary medicine worlds. His immediate team included, amongst a fairly large supporting cast of characters, exceptionally good friends Rachel Trickett (retired principal of St Hugh's College), medical doctor Christian Carritt and Carmen Wheatley DPhil, former pupil.

They set to work researching his type of cancer, treatment approaches and appointments with leading oncologists in the UK and America. In the book we are treated to the author's whimsical renditions of his consultations and communications with a host of consultants including Professor Ernst Wynder (formerly of the Sloan-Kettering Hospital), who made this pivotal comment to one of the author's cast of friends "I tell you one thing, boy," he said. "If your friend touches chemotherapy, he's a goner." A host of experts from the cancer world lined up to recommend chemotherapy treatment to the author.

Meanwhile we are witness to the extraordinary types of information and contacts provided to the author: a telephone 'interview' with Dr Nicholas Gonzalez, historical accounts of William Kelly, a consultation with Jan de Vries, recommendations to read Leslie Kenton's book *Raw Energy*, Beata Bishop's book *A Time to Heal* and *Integrated Cancer Care* (Editor Jennifer Barraclough), delivery of a juicer, referrals to a former friend who had adopted the Gerson therapy and had survived, consultations with the Linus Pauling Institute, to name but a few of the cast in this book. Along the way, the Bristol Cancer Help Centre was contacted re Gerson (the receptionist said that they didn't do Gerson and hung up the phone), and we are with the author when he encounters the enema bucket in a wholefood store in Paddington Street, London.

Michael Gearin-Tosh's regime included, briefly: the Gerson Therapy, orthomolecular oncology (Pauling/Hoffer high-dose supplements, including Vitamins C, B, E, beta carotene, selenium, zinc, calcium/magnesium and multi-vitamins, Bisphosphonates (for his weak bones), Enzymes, Metabolic Typing, Acupuncture, Visualization and Breathing Exercises.

Interwoven in the author's narrative are titbits of his complicated and intriguing social and professional life, his travels and travel companions, some of his nightmares (a French consultant who told him never to mention the word 'cancer' again) and excerpts from Primo Levi's book about Auschwitz.

However, what ought to make the medical establishment cringe with embarrassment and take note are that certain of its practitioners were guilty of abruptness, rudeness, bullying attempts to force treatment and insensitivity in discussing life and death matters with patients.

Gearin-Tosh would probably have opted for the chemotherapy had it made sense to him. But what this man had, most invaluable, was a stubborn requirement to understand the rationale behind the treatment (if there was no cure, then what was the purpose of undergoing toxic treatment?), a good measure of common sense, and a distaste of being rushed into treatment against his wishes.

He had the amazing good sense to tape record his consultation with his Consultant, so that he could listen to it over and over again when the shock of the death sentence wasn't quite so numbing, something with which Professor Robert Kyle (Mayo Clinic) concurs.

This book unusually includes, in addition to Michael Gearin-Tosh's account of his cancer odyssey, statements from eminent clinicians Sir David Weatherall FRS (Weatherall Institute of Molecular Medicine, University of Oxford), Professor Robert A Kyle (Mayo Clinic, Rochester USA) and a detailed Case History by Carmon Wheatley DPhil, which has been peer-reviewed by leading international experts. This Case History describes the Gerson therapy in detail, theorizing how each component in the author's regime may act to counter cancer.

These cancer experts don't understand how or even if the author's regime contributed to his survival, but state that the Gerson regime ought to be subject to prospective clinical trials to either prove efficacy, or to save patients "inconvenience, effort and expense". Why is it that so many people are so worried about cancer patients wasting their time and money on diet and nutritional supplements – one never hears them moaning about cancer patients going on holiday, buying new clothes or spending money on eating out in restaurants.

Will this book push forward the case regarding nutritional approaches to cancer? I would have thought that Michael Gearin-Tosh speaks the language of the Establishment; however, this battle has been waged for much of this century (read the majority of my Editorials in *Positive Health* for my views on the issue). Most depressing were the readers' responses following its first serialization in *The Sunday Times* in which cancer patients, relatives, carers and physicians expressed their outrage at the publication of this patient's unorthodox regime: "I hope you thought long and hard about the effect on other myeloma sufferers...particularly those starting, in the middle of or completing 'traditional' treatment... I am, of course, delighted he is still alive...but it seems irresponsible and possibly cruel to print, even as reported conversation, something like: "If your friend touches chemotherapy he's a goner". "...Desperate people will try anything and cancer patients are often desperate, therefore easy prey for woolly-brained mavericks, at best, and at worst, unscrupulous, unethical charlatans who are prepared to take their last few pennies for some false hope of cure."

At the very least, the detailed Case History prepared by Carmen Wheatley and peer-reviewed ought to be required reading, along with this book, for all Cancer treatment practitioners.