The Hoxsey Treatment for Cancer

The National Cancer Institute of the Public Health Service, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, has on two occasions examined case records and other data submitted by Mr. Harry M. Hoxsey in connection with requests that the treatment used at the Hoxsey Cancer Clinic in Dallas, Texas, be investigated by the Institute. In each instance the information was insufficient for an adequate scientific evaluation. In order to make such an evaluation the Institute has an established policy governing the investigation of remedies claimed as cancer cures. The treatment to be investigated must be explained fully, complete clinical records must be submitted on a suitable number of patients treated with the remedy under competent medical supervision, and the records should show that the patients survived at least five years following treatment.

This policy is designed to permit the investigation of any remedy for which a reasonable demonstration of results can be made. The Public Health Service believes, however, that the time of scientists engaged in important research should not be used to evaluate claims which are not sufficiently substantiated. The medical profession and cancer investigators are chiefly concerned with finding new methods of curing cancer of internal sites, since most cancer deaths are the result of internal lesions. About 95 percent of external or skin cancer cases can now be cured by surgery or irradiation.
At present there are only two recognized methods of treatment by which internal cancer can be cured: surgery and irradiation by x-ray or radium. (Certain chemical agents are proving to be useful in the treatment of cancer, but as yet no cures have been effected by the use of drugs alone).

The Hoxsey treatment for cancer is by methods other than the medically recognized and approved procedures. The treatment is started with examination of the patient, which includes diagnostic x-rays, blood and urine tests. Originally the treatment consisted essentially of the administration of a black or brownish liquid and a pink liquid. In November 1954, the use of a tablet was substituted for the black and pink liquids. All the ingredients, both in the pink and black medicines and the tablets, are well known to medical science. They are of no value whatever in the treatment of cancer of any type.

At the present time, the only final, acceptable diagnosis of cancer is based on a positive biopsy, that is, on the recognition of cancer cells in a microscopic examination of a section of the tumor. Clinical records on cancer cases cannot be considered complete unless they include such microscopic sections or reports of positive biopsies by recognized pathologists.

Mr. Hoxsey first submitted records of patients treated with his remedies to the National Cancer Institute in 1945. He had previously been advised that his method of treatment would be investigated by the Institute if he submitted records on 50 patients with internal cancer, evidence that their condition had been confirmed by biopsy, and proof that they were free of
cancer five years after receiving his treatment. However, 40 of the 60 records submitted at that time were of patients who had been treated at the Hoxsey clinic for external cancer. None of the records of the remaining 20 patients treated for alleged internal cancer included microscopic sections or reports of positive biopsies which would show the patients had cancer at the time of their admission to the Hoxsey clinic. A National Cancer Institute review of all the case histories showed that only 5 of the 20 patients ever had a biopsy and that only one could be considered as having cancer at the time the Hoxsey treatment was instituted.

In 1950 Mr. Hoxsey renewed his request for investigation and submitted records of 77 patients. Six of the case histories were accompanied by microscopic sections. A Committee of the National Advisory Cancer Council appointed to review Mr. Hoxsey's material, concluded that none of the records or microscopic sections met the requirements for investigation. Thirty-one of the 77 patients had not survived five years after treatment. Of the remaining 46 cases, 12 would have met the requirements if microscopic sections had been included. In the circumstances, it was impossible to verify the diagnoses of cancer made when the patients entered the Dallas clinic. The Committee reported that the six microscopic sections included with Mr. Hoxsey's records were taken from patients who had received therapy within the previous five years. In addition to their failure to qualify on this ground, two of the tissue preparations were so poorly prepared they could not be diagnosed and two others showed noncancerous conditions.

In July 1952, proceeding under the provisions of the Federal Food, Drug,
and Cosmetic Act, the United States sought to obtain an injunction to prevent the Hoxsey Cancer Clinic and Harry M. Hoxsey from introducing or delivering for introduction into interstate commerce liquids intended for use in the treatment and cure of cancer in man. A decision of the U. S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit on July 31, 1952, in this case states, "the overwhelming weight of the credible evidence requires a conclusion that the representation that the Hoxsey liquid medicines are efficacious in the cure of cancer is likewise false and misleading."

On October 26, 1953, the U. S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas issued a decree of permanent injunction against the Hoxsey Cancer Clinic in Dallas, Texas, forbidding the interstate shipment of his liquid medicines and "any similar drugs" with unqualified labeling claims that they are effective in the treatment of cancer.

In March 1955 a Hoxsey Cancer Clinic was opened at Portage, Pennsylvania. Soon after the opening the Government seized a quantity of pills and literature on charges that the pills were misbranded because of unwarranted claims in the treatment of cancer in the labeling. That seizure action is being contested by the Hoxsey Cancer Clinic at Portage, and the matter is pending in the U.S. District Court at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

The Food and Drug Administration, an agency of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, issued a "Public Warning Against Hoxsey Cancer Treatment" on April 4, 1956. The warning says: "The Food and Drug Administration has conducted a thorough and long-continuing investigation of Hoxsey's treatment. His claimed cures have been extensively studied and the Food and Drug Administration has not found a single verified cure of internal cancer effected by the Hoxsey treatment."

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