

# Stage 4 Pancreatic Cancer Successfully Reversed in Seven Months

By Hsieh Ming-Chin and Tseng Hsiu-Ying

A 67-year-old lady who had lost 12 kg in only two months sought medical attention for black stool. An examination at Taichung Tzu Chi Hospital revealed pancreatic cancer which had

metastasized to the peritoneum and had already reached stage 4.

Dr. Yu Cheng-Chan, Director of the General Surgery Division, tried all he could to combat the cancer together



**Dr. Yu Cheng-Chan, Director of the General Surgery Division, tried all he could to cure the pancreatic cancer the patient was suffering from. As a result, her cancer has been reversed from stage 4 to stage 2 and the patient's condition remains stable.**



with the patient. They didn't give up any hope. After undergoing various treatments including chemotherapy, splenic artery embolization, and surgery over a period of seven months, the patient's cancer was finally reversed to stage 2. No recurrence has been detected during a tracking period of six months. The doctor, the patient, and her family all cherish the lady's new lease of life.

The old lady's treatment process had its twists and turns. She recalls that after losing 12 kg in a short period of two months, she observed black stool and decided to go to a clinic. The results of a blood test revealed severe anemia. The doctor referred her to a hospital for a gastroscopy. She was diagnosed with gastric variceal rupture and bleeding caused by cirrhosis. No improvement was achieved through a 2-month medication regimen ordered by the doctor.

She then decided to seek a second opinion at Taichung Tzu Chi Hospital. Upon consultation with a physician of the Division of Gastroenterology, abdominal ultrasonography was performed. A pancreatic focus was detected in this sonography, and she was immediately transferred to the Division of General Surgery.

Director Yu Cheng-Chan determined through a CT scan, gastroscopy, and



**Dr. Yu Cheng-Chan explains the areas affected by pancreatic cancer and possible treatment methods with the aid of a model.**

laparoscopy that the old lady's cancer cells had already metastasized to the peritoneum. The tumor had encroached on the stomach area, which had resulted in a bleeding ulcer. She was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer and the prognosis was pessimistic.

Despite the fact that she had contracted the "king of cancers", she didn't give up hope. She fully cooperated with Director Yu's therapy plan. After undergoing a series of chemotherapy treatments, her tumor had shrunk noticeably. Unexpectedly, the patient's gastric bleeding recurred and could not be stopped since the focus was too deep. No improvement was achieved with another splenic artery embolization. At one point, she wanted to give up and

transfer to the hospice ward in the face of the dual blow of the emotionally and physically exhausting therapy and her dramatic turn for the worse.

Director Yu couldn't bear to see her give up after coming so far. He continued to implore the patient to hang on to a glimmer of hope. Finally, the lady agreed to surgery.

In accordance with the hemostasis surgery plan, the areas invaded by the tumor including the tail of the pancreas, the spleen, part of the stomach, and the colon were surgically removed in sequence. Almost all the viscera in the upper left abdomen had been treated. In the process of the surgery, it was accidentally detected that the metastatic focus had disappeared after chemotherapy. The final pathology report revealed that the patient's stage 4 cancer had been successfully reversed to stage

2. No signs of recurrence were detected during a tracking period of six months!

Upon hearing the good news, the lady expressed her profound gratitude for the dedicated efforts of the medical team. She shared with the team that she particularly cherished the fact that she would have more time to spend with her family.

The fortunate reversal of the disease course was a heartening moment for the medical team. Director Yu points out that pancreatic cancer is often dubbed a "silent killer" since the early stages are asymptomatic. When patients are diagnosed, the cancer has often already advanced to a late stage. As a surgeon, he must accurately judge the timing and take action at the right moment without ever giving up on the patient. The case of the old lady also made him realize that hope is always present if we don't give

up easily thanks to the advances in medical technology.



**Dr. Yu Cheng-Chan, the leader of the general surgery team, realized from a pancreatic cancer case that hope is always present if we don't give up easily thanks to the advances in medical technology.**