

Science meets ancient knowledge in cancer care

• By GUY TRAIHER

In November 2018, Dr. Yair Maimon was chosen to present his 20-year research on the effects of traditional Chinese botanical formulas on cancer at UNESCO HQ in Paris. In front of representative from 90 countries, Maimon presented a summary of his research into one botanical formula, whose scientific name is LCS101, and its effect in cancer care.

Maimon was the former head of the Complementary Medicine Unit at Ichilov Hospital in Tel Aviv, where he pioneered the integration of natural and Chinese medicine inside a hospital set up. The integration was accepted in some departments but was utterly rejected by the oncology ward.

"The formal reason was the lack of scientific evidence. This has led me to take it as a challenge," said Maimon.

This decision charted the path to international scientific collaborations, promising findings, and ultimately presenting the finding, achievement and integrative cancer care concept at the UN conference.

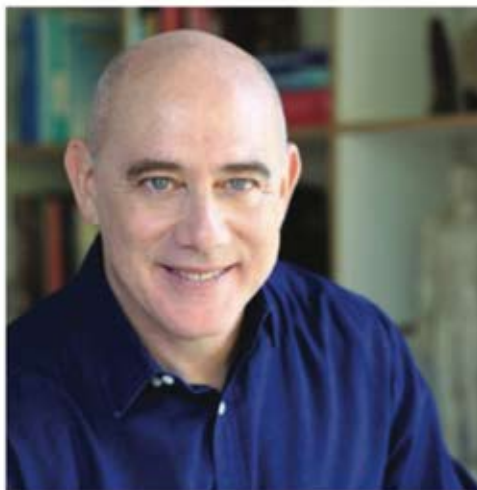
Today, Maimon is the head of the Tal Integrative Cancer Research Center, which exists as part of the Oncology Department of Sheba Medical Center. The center was established to provide the basic answer to the most needed question: How can we validate the efficacy of natural medicine and integrate it into modern care?

The foremost reason for the lack of integration of natural medicine – especially herbal and botanical medicine – into the usual cancer care is due to the lack of evidence which modern medicine demands.

"It's important to understand that natural medicine, which had shown safety for years, needs a different approach that new invented molecules need," says Maimon. "Still we need to create a change and research is the spearhead."

Why have you decided to focus on integrative cancer research?

I believe that my passion for cancer research stems from the deep quest to alleviate suffering and promote healing. It may well be that being a second generation to Holocaust survivors had a deep effect on my life and my path. My father is a Holocaust and Auschwitz survivor, although he was able to build a positive successful life, his generation experienced deep human suffering, and I believe that our generation has a quest to seek to better human life. There-



YAIR MAIMON
(Courtesy)

fore, pursuing the search for curing and alleviating human suffering was the path which led me to pioneer integrative medicine in Israel since the late 80s.

The reason to focus on the botanical effects on cancer and immune system was inspired from my 30 years of clinical experience with Chinese botanical medicine and the consistent positive and many time outstanding results in my clinic.

What were the highlights and unexpected findings of your research?

I can sum it up in three areas: protection from side effects of conventional cancer treatments, effect on the immune system and "selective killing effect" on cancer cells.

Our first human research had shown a strong protection from the side effects of chemotherapy. Breast cancer patients who took LCS101, alongside the chemotherapy, had significantly better blood count, hence better immunity, than patients taking placebo. We further investigated the effects on immune cells and saw a strong influence on strengthening immunity. Surprisingly, the same formula showed also a "Selective Killing Effect" on cancer cells. When we tested LCS101 on both normal and cancerous cells, it targeted and destroyed cancer cells, while at

the same time safeguarding and protecting normal cells, almost as if it had its own wisdom. Potentially, these types of findings can help us to better understand natural products and the importance of implementing this formula in cancer prevention.

Another unforeseen finding was the synergistic effect of the formula with radiation. When we added the formula to irradiated cancer cells, we saw an increase in the destruction of cancer cells.

Additionally, we have carried and published our findings showing no reduction of the effect of when we combine them with modern drugs, and we even found that the formula even enhanced the effect on chemo, for example. Currently these findings encourage some oncologists leading to a more positive attitude toward integration of herbal natural medicine in cancer. We can take the use of cannabis as a good example of how something which was so controversial now moves into consensus and integrates into the choice patients have to improve their quality of life.

On our latest medical publication summarizing 20 years of research, we have collaborated with Prof. Rosenthal from Harvard Medical School. This collaboration was possible due to the ample of evidence which we can present. This is another step of recognition which we are starting to get from more oncologists around the world.

What influence will it have on future cancer care? What is your vision?

My vision is to change the way cancer is treated and to know we are doing our best for these patients. From my experience, the new discoveries are more in our backyard and we are searching far away.

Our aim is to create a bridge between natural medicine and modern cancer care... and to provide the best care and quality of life to cancer patient. But it is important not to wait for future development, the future is here and the integration can start now, as many patients are already experiencing.

What can we hope for the future in the integrative cancer care and prevention?

It's best described by the quote, "the science of medicine and the art of healing."

This is a leading message which I am trying to convey. When we combine the healing power, which is the essence of life, with our science and nature's wisdom, we can expect cures and better health.