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[A Report on the Natural Duration of Cancer.](#)

Author(s) : [GREENWOOD, M.](#)

Book : [Reports on Public Health and Medical Subjects. Ministry of Health 1926 No. 1](#) pp.

Abstract : In the course of the investigations of the Departmental Committee on Cancer it was found necessary to form some standard of comparison by means of which the results of various methods of treatment of cancer could be judged. The object of this report is to provide a basis of this nature.

In the study of cancer from the clinical side there exists no well-defined criteria of success or failure of a method of treatment. The author considers that three

should be taken into account, in order to obtain a numerical measure of treatment: (1) the average duration of life of persons of the same age as the patient, not known to be suffering from the disease; (2) the average duration of life of persons suffering from the disease and left untreated; (3) the average duration of life of persons suffering from the disease and treated in the manner, the value of which it is desired to test. The methods in obtaining these measures are discussed.

The data analysed were 4, 238 cases relating to seven primary sites, namely breast, uterus, rectum, tongue and mouth, oesophagus, larynx and stomach. The natural duration of life from onset to death for all ages for cancer of these sites were calculated. [img 1T228.tif]

There appeared to be little relation between the age of onset and duration of life. Tables are given of the mean duration of life for each site in quinquennial age groups. Survivorship tables were constructed calculating the chances of survival up to 10 years for untreated cases of cancer in each of the seven sites. Cancer of the breast is used as an example to show how, from the data of natural duration and of surgically-treated cases, a measure of the average effects of treatment can be deduced.

The result shows the advantage of resort to early operation which in the case of cancer of the breast would in the aggregate add thousands of years to the life of the patient. H. M. Woods.

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Identifier(s) : cancers, esophagus, mammary tumour, methods, therapeutics

Broader term(s) : Homo, Hominidae, primates, mammals, vertebrates, Chordata, eukaryotes

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