

MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGHS **RESEARCH SUMMARY**

TOPIC: WHIPPLE SAVES DON FROM PANCREATIC CANCER
REPORT: **MB #4971**

BACKGROUND: In 2021, approximately 60,000 Americans will be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. It is currently the 3rd leading cause of cancer-related death in the United States after lung and colon, having the highest mortality rate of all major cancers. Symptoms for pancreatic cancer may include weight loss, abdominal discomfort, back pain, and development of type 2 diabetes. Some tumors may cause jaundice leading to earlier diagnosis. For all stages combined, the 5-year relative survival rate is 10%. Even for the small percentage of people diagnosed with local disease, the 5-year survival is only 39%. Most patients are diagnosed at a later stage, for which the 5-year survival is 3%.

(Source: <https://pancreatic.org/pancreatic-cancer/pancreatic-cancer-facts/>)

STANDARD TREATMENTS: Pancreatic cancer treatment depends on the patient's overall health and stage of the disease. Standard treatments for pancreatic cancer are surgery, chemotherapy, radiation, or a mix of these. For eligible patients, surgery is the best option for long-term survival. Another option is chemotherapy which uses drugs to kill cancer cells by stopping them from growing and dividing. These drugs travel through the bloodstream and damage cancer cells throughout the body. The goal of radiation is to stop the tumor from growing or to shrink it while not harming the healthy organs or tissue nearby. Doctors may use radiation therapy to relieve pain the tumor causes, try to shrink the tumor before surgery, or destroy cancer cells that may be in the area after surgery. Clinical trials are the only way for researchers to see if new treatments help people with pancreatic cancer.

(Source: <https://www.pancan.org/facing-pancreatic-cancer/treatment/treatment-types/>)

NEW WHIPPLE PROCEDURE: The Whipple procedure, or pancreaticoduodenectomy, is a surgery used to remove tumors in the pancreas. The Whipple removes and reconstructs a large part of the gastrointestinal tract and is considered a difficult and complex operation. If a tumor is in the head of the pancreas and has not spread to other areas of the body, the Whipple procedure may be attempted. In a standard Whipple procedure, the surgeon removes the head of the pancreas, the gallbladder, the duodenum, a portion of the stomach and surrounding lymph nodes, and then reconnects the remaining pancreas and digestive organs. In some cases, patients may undergo a modified version of the Whipple procedure, which keeps the entire stomach and the stomach valve called the pylorus.

(Source: <https://www.pancan.org/facing-pancreatic-cancer/treatment/treatment-types/surgery/whipple-procedure-pancreaticoduodenectomy/>)

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS REPORT, PLEASE CONTACT:

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If this story or any other Ivanhoe story has impacted your life or prompted you or someone you know to seek or change treatments, please let us know by contacting Marjorie Bekaert Thomas at mthomas@ivanhoe.com