

## **How do you determine fact from fiction?**

According to a study published in the European Journal of Cancer, mistaken beliefs in the causes of cancer is rife. By comparing research for the past twenty years and how we access news and information it would seem that reliance on the internet, social media and TV shows has increased, and this is part of the problem. Unfortunately, the same goes for the *treatment* of cancer.

In 2016, more than 50% of the most shared cancer articles on Facebook contained medically discredited claims. Problems arise when patients follow these claims and do not seek timely medical intervention that can help them. This delay in treatment often results in a poorer outcome for the patient.

Georgetown University School of Medicine students identified more than 300 recommendations made in one month during two celebrity doctor TV shows. Nearly 80% of the recommendations on both shows did not align with evidence-based medical guidelines. Half of the research used to support claims did not produce results that were significant and no research could be found to support a third of the claims.

There are no guarantees for anyone regarding the more than 200 diseases that come under the cancer umbrella, but making sure that *real* risk factors are identified allows for changes to be made in lifestyle that would help reduce our risk of developing cancer.

The same goes for treatment of cancer. Unfortunately, many cancer patients are inundated with misleading information regarding their disease and treatment plan. Nutrition and special diets are often at the top of the list of internet cures and can be overwhelming and confusing, which ultimately does not help the patient.

The World Cancer Research Fund and the American Institute of Cancer Research program the Continuous Update Project (CUP), is an ongoing program that analyses cancer prevention and survival related to diet, nutrition and exercise. Data is collected from scientifically based research from around the world. An international team of experts evaluates and interprets the evidence, making judgments on the strength of the evidence regarding the likelihood that the area studied has any effect on the risk of cancer. A link to these studies can be found on the Community Cancer Center website. [www.roseburgcancer.org](http://www.roseburgcancer.org)

The National Institute of Health has a great handout on 'How to evaluate health information on the internet and Brian Dunning has created a 15-point checklist, "How to Spot Pseudoscience". Both of these tools are on the Community Cancer Center website.

Additionally, the staff at the Community Cancer Center are always available to discuss any questions you may have about your diagnosis, treatment or nutrition issues.

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