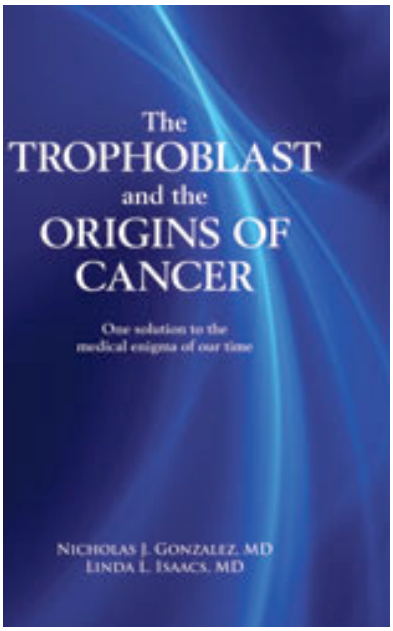

The Trophoblast and the Origins of Cancer: One Solution to the Medical Enigma of Our Time

By Nicholas Gonzalez, MD, and Linda Isaacs, MD

An Intriguing Approach to Cancer and How to Treat It

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Where does cancer come from? What's going on in our bodies when we get cancer? This intriguing, seriously researched book offers a plausible – but unorthodox – explanation for at least the 90% of cancers. These are the tumors that initiate in the epithelium, the lining of our organs and glands. Researchers have long puzzled over why healthy somatic cells should, or could, become malignant. Drs. Gonzalez and Isaacs propose that it is stem cells that go awry, stem cells that in being plenipotentiary, or "invested with full power," can become anything. Why does this occur? Because in that respect they resemble the trophoblast, the specialized cells that develop soon after conception, the very same trophoblast which must attach to and "invade" the wall of the uterus in order to anchor the future placenta.

The book starts off with where we started off, right at conception. There are beautiful color illustrations of the egg we all once were and the early cell divisions and then the uterine attachment. Although the process is complex, the language is our everyday language, and scientific terms are well explained when they come up. You don't need a science background to read this book.

One of the pivotal facts that this theory hinges on is that the placenta stops growing at just the same time the embryonic pancreas starts producing digestive enzymes. But that is puzzling, as the fetus doesn't need digestive enzymes because the mother is pre-digesting all the food! Nature must be up to something; could it be that these enzymes signal the placenta to stop growing? And if that were the case, would pancreatic enzymes help stop cancerous tumors from growing?

The authors enumerate ways in which the trophoblast and cancer cells behave similarly:

- They are both invasive. (Remember the attachment to the uterine wall.)
- They both proliferate.
- They are not differentiated, i.e., they are plenipotentiary and can become anything. Although cancer cells resemble the cells in the location where they begin proliferating, i.e. the breast or colon, researchers say this looks like mimicry.
- They can migrate. Another aspect of trophoblasts is that some of them quit the site of the placenta and migrate back to the embryo, where they become either stem cells or else the gender-deciding cells, i.e., Male or Female.
- They are angiogenic and can produce capillaries to increase their own blood supply.
- They both have complicated ways of co-opting the immune response that might otherwise destroy them.

Because of the coincidence – which happens at eight weeks in humans – when the placenta stops growing and the embryo's pancreas starts producing digestive enzymes, these oncologists offer their patients a treatment that includes pancreatic enzymes, particularly those that digest protein.

How this coincidence and the subsequent comparison between the trophoblast and cancer calls came to light is an interesting story. Dr. Gonzalez's mentor, the head of Sloan-Kettering Hospital in New York, sent him in the early 1980's to look into the work of a dentist called Kelley. Kelley, it turned out, had been reading the research of an eminent British scientist who earlier in the 20th century had discovered the coincidence in all mammals he looked at and had, as a result, started to develop treatments using pancreatic enzymes. This book is dedicated to his memory: John Beard, 1858-1924.

Pancreatic enzymes are not part of a mainstream treatment for cancer even though they have helped quite a few patients, as attested to by the compelling case studies at the end of this book. Whether this treatment could help anyone you know or not, the careful analysis of the origins of cancer tumors will make for instructive and fascinating reading.

Our bodies and how they work are endlessly remarkable and deserving of the kind of attention Dr. Gonzalez and Dr. Isaacs offer in The Trophoblast and the Origins of Cancer.

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