

Stan's Story- Intestinal Cancer

In June of 2000 after experiencing epigastric pain, backache and eventually weight loss, Alan – who also goes by Stan amongst friends – was diagnosed with a rare and non-aggressive cancer in his duodenum, referred to as a schwannoma. By the time he received his diagnosis, the tumor unfortunately had grown into the head of his pancreas. As a course of treatment Stan endured nine hours of major surgery resulting in removal of the entire tumor.

After a gradual recovery, Stan, husband and father of three, spent the following four years coming to terms with his diagnosis but it was never far from his mind.

In January 2007, after several months of increasing pain and gradual weight loss, Stan was told there was localized enlargement of a lymph node close to the pancreas. After three months of tests, doctors informed Stan that his tumor had returned. Again the tumor was only small and slow growing but unfortunately it had wrapped itself around a major blood vessel.

Surgery was discussed, palliative radiotherapy was mentioned and somewhere along the line “2 to 3 years left” was slipped into the conversation. Stan's family couldn't consider anything other than a cure. So after extensive discussion, Stan, along with his family, decided risky surgery was the only answer. They knew it would be a tricky surgery but felt they had no other option.

It was during the weeks leading up to Stan's impending surgery that he and his wife decided to do some additional research and came upon the CyberKnife[®] Robotic Radiosurgery System. Surgery without the scalpel....what more could they ask for? Feeling like they were left with no other options and unwilling to accept that Stan could only be offered palliative treatment in the United Kingdom they knew CyberKnife treatment was the answer.

After discovering that CyberKnife radiosurgery was not available in the United Kingdom Stan and his family were prepared to travel, so they started their search close to home; to a clinic in Europe. Unfortunately, due to the location of Stan's tumor, the placement of fiducial markers was going to be tricky. Determined to find a cure, Stan's wife contacted several CyberKnife treatment centers. Plans were then made to travel to Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, D.C. for CyberKnife treatment.

Stan was nervous going into his first appointment at Georgetown University Hospital, but his radiation oncologist, Dr. Gregory Gagnon informed him that treating the tumor would be relatively easy and since his tumor had not spread to other organs, control of the current tumor would be very achievable. Stan was then scheduled for three sessions of CyberKnife radiosurgery arranged over three consecutive days.

Nearly a year after Stan had his CyberKnife treatment his health has continued to improve. Before Stan could barely walk from his bed to the sofa downstairs and his days were occupied with counting the hours down until his next dose of morphine. But now, Stan's life is slowly returning to normal. He is now back to work three days a week and is able to go on hikes with his family, most of the way with his 3-year-old son on his back.

Since undergoing treatment, Stan has made it his mission to educate others about CyberKnife radiosurgery and helping them gain access to the treatment. He developed a Web site



www.cyberknifeinfo.co.uk and recently established a charity, The “Stan Bowley CyberKnife Trust” that aims to help others finance their treatment.