

Paul Gauthier:

Good evening.

First, I would like to thank Aaron for inviting me this evening.

My name is Paul Gauthier, and I have gone through three bouts of prostate cancer since November 1996.

Following the original diagnosis, I underwent 35 radiation therapy treatments in February / March 1997 at Princess Margaret Hospital.

On September 29, 2003, I was told that the cancer had returned, and since a second round of radiation was out of the question, I was “transferred” to Dr. John Trachtenberg. After studying my case, he told me that I met all the criteria for a research study treatment called Photo Dynamic Therapy (PDT). 24 individuals (from Montreal and Toronto) had received this treatment in the summer of 2003 with great results. This treatment was just starting its second phase in early 2004, so, with excitement and anticipation, I agreed.

It took place on April 4, 2004.

I was patient number 1 of Phase II.

The treatment uses a drug (WST09) in conjunction with PDT. The treatment consists of a single intravenous administration of a static molecule, called the photo sensitizer. This photo sensitizer is then activated by a particular laser light in a precisely targeted cancerous zone of the body resulting in the destruction of this zone. The number of fibres used to deliver the laser light is determined by the size of the prostate gland (up to a maximum of six fibres; I had four).

Other probes are placed through the skin for measuring light penetration in the areas that are illuminated. Recently, techniques have been developed to allow accurate positioning of the laser-delivering devices within the prostate, and to precisely control the extent of the damage.

In addition, the instruments used to deliver laser light in the prostate can now be inserted through the skin without the necessity for open incisions. The procedure is done under general anesthetic in the operating room. A Foley catheter is also inserted, and removed seven days later. An overnight hospital stay is required in a blacked-out room; this is because the drug is sensitive to ultraviolet lights. Discharge takes place the next day, with certain restrictions, such as the wearing of special sunglasses, blacked-out bedroom / bathroom, limited time of TV viewing, etc... I have to say that the recuperation was quite easy, except for some discomfort due to the catheter, and some mild pain in the groin/prostate area.

The follow-up protocol is frequent:

- seven days – MRI and removal of the catheter
- one-month and three-month - blood work
- six-month – MRI, blood work and biopsy
- nine-month – blood work
- and 12-month – MRI and eye exam

I had six tumors when the treatment took place: four were destroyed and two were reduced to an extremely small size.

Everything was fine until November 2005, when I was told - again - that the cancer was returning.

Again, I was offered the same treatment - which I wanted - as it was now entering Phase III, (re-treatment of previous study patients – I believe five patients, up to today).

The Phase II was also being extended to accept new patients.

The treatment took place on March 22, 2006 – my birthday.

This time six laser lights were used and the recovery was much harder, simply due to the pain.

Because of the anesthesia and the Tylenol 3's, I became constipated for 72 hours! It was like a vicious circle: there was pain, so I took Tylenol 3's, which constipated me, which caused more pain I also suffered from mild temporary incontinence.

I am now feeling 100% better, have managed to lose 22 pounds (a few during my recovery and the rest through a better diet and swimming). I was on medical leave for four months, and back at work. My last PSA was 3.3 – compared to 10.6 before.

From now on, only time will tell, but I remain hopeful that this was the last time I need treatment for this disease.

Thank you.