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Case Report

Cary Strohmeyer and use of CST as part of a cancer treatment team.

– He and his family's names used at his request.

Cary Strohmeyer and his wife Donna have a stout belief in the use of CranioSacral Therapy and how he is certain that it helped him through brain surgery. Cary and his wife Donna had been introduced to CST through their daughter Gracie; they had been making the three hour round trip from west Texas bringing her in for treatments for several years and through her response to her treatments, had learned how beneficial CranioSacral Therapy (CST) is for boosting our body's healing abilities.

Some history.

During a hiking trip down to the floor of the Grand Canyon in April 2013 he began having trouble lifting his left foot as he walked. This continued after he returned home and new problems began arising. Over the next month the weakness became progressive, walking was increasingly difficult and he began having memory problems. He went to his family doctor who promptly referred him on to a neurologist. An MRI revealed a brain tumor, a 6.3 cm mass within the right frontal lobe extending across the corpus callosum into the left frontal lobe. The mass was cystic and fluid filled. It was shifting the lateral ventricles to the left and partially obstructing them. Events began unfolding very quickly and surgery was scheduled in 1 week, for a biopsy. This was delayed a week because the neurosurgeon decided to do a craniotomy instead of just a small hole for the biopsy. The day before surgery Cary thought of CST and how it could help his body be stronger for surgery. He telephoned IPT, "I am having brain surgery tomorrow, can you fit me in somewhere for a treatment prior to the surgery?"

When he arrived that evening for his treatment the effects of the tumor were starkly evident. He was limping, his speech seemed labored, and he appeared fatigued and subdued. There was an underlying gray cast to his face and his breathing was shallower than normal. A normally hale and hearty person, he now needed help removing his shoes and getting up onto the treatment table.

His CranioSacral system was struggling. The circulation of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) was rapid and just a flutter on the right. It was too weak to initiate any cranial bone flexion or extension

anywhere but a tiny bit of movement at the right ptyergoid process of the Temporal bone. There was a very empty feeling under the right occipital area, as if there was no CSF flowing in that area at all. His occiput tilted inferiorly and the mass was pushing the left this pulled the Falxes into a tight counterclockwise torsion. Restoration of any vitality to the CS system and improvement of CSF circulation was vital for Cary.

His CS system was so compromised that the gentler techniques of treating an infant CS system seemed appropriate, only blending first and then decompressing sparingly, much of the work was intention only. At this point there were so many unknown factors that utmost caution was observed, no big changes of intra-cranial pressures, the mass itself was composed of fluid. For over an hour the cranial bones were very gently encouraged into motion. I just cradled his occiput in my hands and waited…there was pulsing from the right side. Cary reported that he felt a deep throbbing and then a whoosh! His occiput settled evenly into my hands. I blended with his frontal bone and again waited… no traction. His Falxes seemed to soften and relax, even though the mass was still stretching the falx cerebri. The flow of CSF was now palpable all over his cranium, not strong but it was there now.

As the treatment came to a close Donna asked him what the treatment felt like. He replied,

"It felt like my favorite flavor of ice cream just melted over my head but it wasn't cold, it was warm."

He sat up easily, swung his feet off the table and stood up. The weakness in his left leg had gone away, he said he felt fantastic, and the best he had in several months. He walked out with confidence, his foot no longer dragging. He was closer to himself as I had known him before, an animated cheerful man. He matter of factly said he had many things to share because according to the neurosurgeon he might not be able to talk after the surgery, a sobering thought. The risks included hemorrhage, stroke, swelling of the brain and infection.

The next day Donna began sending me texts about his progress.

June 11th it's Donna. The CST treatment today was a huge help to Cary. Best he's felt in weeks. You will be key to his recovery

June 12th they just took Cary back, he was in good spirits. Surgery expected to take 3-4 hrs. Thanks to all who are praying, will update.

June 12th 1040. He is out of surgery. Removed a large amount of fluid and were able to get several biopsies. Preliminary result astrocytoma.

June 12th 1745. Want to provide late day update. Cary's very coherent and eating, already asking about supper. Still in ICU but doing well

June 13th moved to regular room, good appetite. Surgeon removed 50cc fluid and 3 tissue samples, active cancer cells present. Waiting for final results. Will seek treatment plan then.

June 14th. Goal met for the day. Strohmeyers are headed home to Stephenville. Cary has been released from hospital, recover at home.

Cary had sailed through the craniotomy with none of negative effects this very invasive surgery could bring. His recovery was remarkable. He started talking in the recovery room. In ICU he asked and memorized his caregiver's names, he explained he was testing his memory, it was good.

Now for the next step, the mass was still there, the clinical name: Oligodendroglioma grade III. The removal of approximately 70 ml of fluid from within the tumor had decreased its size and the left midline shift had centered. The next step was the need for radiation, chemotherapy and more CST. Cary was adamant that I was now part of his cancer treatment team, that all of the treatments had equal importance for his healing to take place. His team was spread all over Texas, M.D. Anderson Cancer Treatment Center in Houston, his doctors in Ft. Worth, and Integrative Pediatric therapy (IPT) in Dallas for CST. We never met but we were all working together, respecting each component of his treatments.

Three weeks after the craniotomy the staples on the large incision on his right temporal bone were removed and his surgeon approved CST to resume. The first session was notable for reducing the dysfunctions and shock to the brain that opening the cranium entails. It was a dramatic and detailed session including CST, TBS and VM. During treatment he noted that he felt as if, "My brain is twisting and untwisting." There would be many more treatments over the ensuing months when his body brought forth different aspects of the surgery to come into a session. These still happen today. As radiation and chemotherapy treatments continued CST, Visceral Manipulation and The Brain Speaks Techniques were used to support his immune system against the powerful chemo drugs, even though necessary their effects that would be toxic to his system. The common side effects were reduced; he only had occasional bouts of nausea and fatigue.

Over the next few months there were MRI's at two month intervals. Two months post-surgery the MRI showed tumor in the right frontal lobe and corpus callosum to be decreasing. Another two months passed and the tumor had decreased to roughly half of the original size, it was almost gone from the left frontal lobe. There was now no midline shift and the "CSF containing spaces are unremarkable" Two more months and the report "No imaging evidence for recurrent tumor!"

One year after the surgery we have the most recent report. Everything is stable, there is no evidence of disease progression, and the ventricles are normal size.

What now? At his last appointment with his doctor Cary asked him if he was in remission. His doctor said that wasn't a term he could use, jokingly he said it is more like you are under surveillance, meaning Cary will be monitored and checked every two months to ensure there is no re-occurrence. And so we will continue his CST treatments as we began, to support his body's healing abilities.