



Medical research has been critical for me

My name is Sue Hurt, I was diagnosed with Chronic Myeloid Leukaemia (CML) a rare, incurable blood cancer and SCC stage 2 Head and Neck Cancer, and how the world has changed since my diagnosis 12 years ago.

After many examinations, a multidisciplinary team which included my Haematologist, ENT, dental professionals and others made decisions for me to have surgery and then radiation treatment. At the start of radiation treatment international research named my type of cancer an UNKNOWN PRIMARY which lucky for me, changed the type of radiation plan for me. Without international research this may not have happened.

I consider myself extremely fortunate that medical science, knowledge and government policy came together to be able to manage my blood cancer with a first generation medication known as Glivec, a Tyrosine-Kinase Inhibitor (TKI).

I was one of the first CML patients to be prescribed this medication in WA. At the time, there were 236 people diagnosed with CML in Australia in 2007. Today, there are over 4,000 who are prescribed an arsenal of medication from 1st, 2nd & 3rd generation TKIs plus generic drugs and older medication including transplants. Drug therapies have revolutionised the treatment of CML, though there is still no known cure for CML.

Advances in medical research start with the researcher's imagination and hard work, it takes insights from researchers and the courage of patients and large amounts of money. It takes people to become advocates of research for ones' own personal and family health and wellness.

As consumers we can be knowledgeable, look up research studies. We as cancer clients, can use our own imagination to say maybe at some point in my lifetime – there will be a cure.

Because of the research, research dollars invested, and government policy my reality went from having a death sentence 12 years ago to living well past the expected life span on my diagnosis - although this means I will always be on some type of treatment regime.

I live well with my condition with the reality of there being no cure until further research is successful. As time goes forward, I no longer see myself as a patient, but that that as a cancer –client. I use the name Thriver-ship and not Survivor-ship when speaking of cancer in relation to myself.

Sue Hurt, Perth