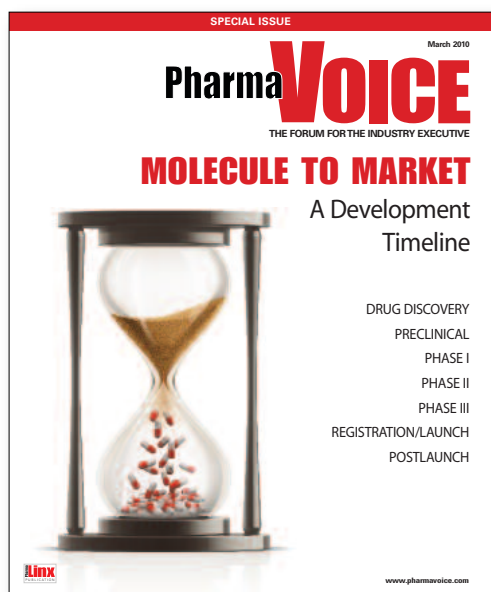


LETTERS



A personal journey

Many of you are no doubt in the midst of data locks, publication deadlines, protocol designs, audits, IRB meetings, accreditation, investigator meetings, or the myriad of events that make up each of our days. If you are reading this letter, we likely met as clinical research colleagues, and if we haven't met yet I hope to do so soon.

I was diagnosed with early-stage breast cancer in January 2010, and just completed six weeks of targeted radiation Friday, April 16th.

My prognosis is great as I was node-negative and 100% ER/PR positive, HER2-negative. After a lumpectomy in late January, I was told Tamoxifen will become my "pharmaceutical friend" for the next few years though at my "young age" of 44 (yes, I don't mind admitting that these days), I may also consider some of the newer preventive therapies as well.

But the story gets more interesting. Three days into my radiation, my father was diagnosed with early-stage pancreatic cancer, which fortunately was resectable; his surgery was completed April 13th. He's doing incredibly well post-op and will start chemo in a few weeks.

After further investigating our family's "source documents," we learned my grandmother and her older sister both died of pancreatic cancer. Though not yet scientifically-confirmed, it seems we may be one of those families with a genetically predisposed disease path for cancer clusters.

As you might imagine, we are meeting with a geneticist shortly. And of course there's good news; often these types of clusters are those that are easier to treat as we now know

Lessons for All

So often we focus on the "details of the day" that we forget the most important compound our industry might develop is a pill for "awareness," which starts with each of us.

— *Alicia Pouncey, M.Ed.*, AUREUS RESEARCH CONSULTANTS LLC



and can initiate screening, treatment, etc., much earlier. Some institutions are also working on vaccines depending on the type of genetic blip.

I am writing this letter in hopes it will be something you keep, maybe some place on a wall that you see daily, where it reminds you how important what we do in clinical research really is.

As a result of many patients and researchers (you guys in oncology research), I was given the option of chemotherapy, as with my type of tumor and stage (stage I), undergoing chemo would only reduce my risk of recurrence in 10 years from 8% to 6%, so I chose not to undergo that treatment.

I initially planned to keep my cancer very personal, only sharing this with my family and Aureus team, of course readjusting work to focus on treatment and rest. But after completing the radiation, I've decided to share my story with you in hopes it might help you, your families, friends, and others. And again, to remind us all that what we do each day in research does matter.

More importantly, we have a responsibility to convey this information to all those around us: family, friends, everyone.

Though my family and I are obviously still adjusting, I have the great fortune of many friends I have met across almost 20 years in an industry that is about discovery, where we are searching for answers, links, reasons to explain

why an event occurred.

So often we focus on the details of the day that we forget the most important compound our industry might develop is a pill for "awareness," which starts with each of us. Many organizations, such as CISC RP (www.ciscrp.org), are working toward this very goal of "awareness" as are institutions that specialize in treating certain illnesses with genetic roadmaps (pathology.jhu.edu/pancreas/NFPTR).

So in closing, one last request: please take a moment out of your hectic days to schedule your overdue screening activities, and I don't mean subject-recruitment. I mean the health-care-screening you've been putting off. And remind your friends/co-workers and your families to get those done too. And, oh yes, give them a pat on the back or a hug when they need it too.

I do hope to connect with each of you at some point in the coming weeks or months. I will be at DIA in June so hopefully we will get to catch up very soon.

It was just JazzFest here in New Orleans, we are near the fifth year anniversary of Katrina (8/29/2010), and the Saints won the Super Bowl, so 2010 really is a great year; I hope it is for you as well.

Alicia Pouncey, M.Ed.
MANAGING DIRECTOR
AUREUS RESEARCH CONSULTANTS LLC

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Brand Champions... Researchers...
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