



Victorian Cancer Trials Link

Clinical trial participant, Peter Currie, shares his experience of being treated in a cancer clinical trial.

My name is Peter. I was diagnosed with stomach cancer when I was 44. I'm now 52.

What treatment did you receive?

I went on a clinical trial and the treatment that I received was nine weeks of chemotherapy. Then I had about a six-week break, and then had surgery, which was a total gastrectomy. And then about another six weeks break after that and then went back onto another nine weeks of chemotherapy.

I was actually the first person on that trial. So, in some aspects I felt a bit like a celebrity.

A little bit nervous and a little bit apprehensive, but also quite excited.

Prior to your treatment, what did you know about clinical trials?

When I was initially offered to go onto a clinical trial, I really had no idea what a trial was. For me, it was really important that it was fully explained. How the process worked, what the desired outcome was, or the reason behind the trial. And then their reasoning for doing the trial and their desired outcome. And when it was explained how that process would work and that it could then shape the way that they treated similar cancers to mine in the future, I thought that would be really beneficial to be part of that.



What information were you given before deciding to participate in a clinical trial?

Before I decided to go on the trial, it was clearly spelled out and explained how the treatment would work on the trial. The trial that I went on, they had two streams of treatment. It was just luck of the draw of what stream you went onto, but they did explain that it would be full of checks. Probably some further tests in relation to my condition, and also my health, and to see how it would go with the different treatment. It was also fully explained that at any point in time, I could pull out of the trial.

To find out more information about the trial I also did some research of my own. I'm fortunate; I've got a really good friend who is

a doctor. He's a GP and spoke to him at length about it, and also my own GP. And they were all really supportive.

Why did you decide to join a clinical trial?

Helping me make my choice of going onto the trial was the notion and the understanding that there was a whole team collectively working towards the trial, and that it was a sort of holistic approach, with a number of people on the trial.

In your experience, what was it like to be treated in a clinical trial?

The trial itself was run very well. I was generally kept informed of the progress of how things were going and how many people were actually part of the trial. My case manager was very responsive and very sort of grateful for the work and effort that I put into it.

In the clinical trial there were some additional appointments, but to me, this was all part of me beating the cancer, so it wasn't as though it was a burden. In actual fact it was probably more a blessing for me to know that I went through everything that I could to actually beat the cancer.

What would you say to someone who is considering participating in a clinical trial?

One of the benefits for me of going on the trial and since being diagnosed and surviving cancer, it's really sort of the changed my outlook on life.

I would recommend anybody if they are offered the opportunity to go into a clinical trial to do it. Certainly for me it's been extremely beneficial.

Clinical trials in cancer care are imperative. And, I think it's really important that they keep doing the trials. It is only because of the trials that we have some of the results, the fantastic results we have now. I think the more trials that they do, and more people that actually get involved in the trials, the better it will be for everybody.

To watch a video of Peter explaining his experience in full, visit
www.cancervic.org.au/trials.

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