

# Brain Cancer

## *Poly-MVA Cancer Patient Testimonials*

### **Mark Olsztyn**

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Diagnosis: Oligodendro Astrocytoma IV

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### **9 Updates**

From 9-07-2000 ..... to 4-07-2010

## **REFLECTIONS ON 15 YEARS OF BEING**

### **CANCER FREE WITH POLY MVA**

IN THE PRESENT MOMENT I sit on my exercise ball which doubles as my chair when I'm at my computer and I am comforted by it and by where I am. I'm 47. It's 2012. If I had believed the grave statistics that confronted me when I was diagnosed I wouldn't be here at all. The sun is shining over the San Francisco Bay, it's 52 degrees here in Sausalito and to top it all off, it's Friday!

15 years ago things didn't look so promising. On **April 7<sup>th</sup> of 1997 I underwent brain surgery for the second time in six years for a recurrent tumor.** When I received the diagnosis of a GBM I knew my life had taken a radical turn away from anything I had known. No longer could I take it for granted that I'd live to see my kids (a son at 3 months and a daughter at 25 months) grow up and maybe have kids of their own or that I would even be around for the turning of the millennium just 2 years and eight months away. This time my survival would require strong doses of radiation and chemotherapy and more than a little luck.

Fortunately, that ‘more than a little luck’ was just around the corner, both literally and figuratively.

**My only shred of hope in all the terror surrounding that diagnosis was my certainty that someone, somewhere had to have survived it.** I only needed to hear about this person, a second or third-hand accounting would have sufficed. It would have been all I needed to not just give up the fight and surrender my body to the palliative measures prescribed by my team of doctors to extend my life a few more months, perhaps even a year or two.

I asked my primary care physician, a serious and somewhat grandfatherly figure who was nearing retirement, if he had known or even heard of someone who survived this diagnosis. **Unfortunately, he said he didn’t know anyone who survived a GBM for more than a couple of years and added that I was wasting my time talking to him. I should rather, he intoned with severity, be putting my affairs in order and talking to God.**

The next afternoon I happened to be enjoying the company of our neighbors who had a ground floor apartment next to our building. I told them about my meeting with my PCP and how devastating his feedback had been. **Almost miraculously, Dan, an affable software engineer, told me that he did, in fact, know of somebody in his home country of Romania who was still alive after ten years with a GBM.** His wife, Adina, confirmed the story of this someone whose cousin’s best friend was alive and well. This tenuous connection to a survivor, five degrees of separation, was all I needed to infuse me with rapture and great hope.

I left their apartment feeling transformed and optimistic. This thing I have, it can be beaten! I knew it! I didn’t ask if I could contact this person in Romania to confirm the story. Part of me didn’t want to know if it was really true but I felt immense gratitude toward Dan and Adina for relaying that information to me at a time when I needed it to simply carry on.

**Not long after that my first shipment of Poly MVA arrived. My father, a homeopathic physician, sent it to me. Eight brown bottles with a sheaf of photocopied patent diagrams and other arcane information were enclosed in a small cardboard box:** an arc of promise. I followed the dosage instructions even while undergoing 33 rounds of radiation and later, throughout my chemotherapy. I still take one teaspoon per day, every day, and expect to continue with that for as long as I live. I will have taken my 10,000<sup>th</sup> teaspoon of Poly MVA when I’m 63.

## **EPILOG**

Being diagnosed with a brain tumor is a terrifying experience. It takes time to simply digest the news that your life will be irrevocably altered. It doesn’t have to mean for the worse.

Cancer can make you aware how precious your time is and how important those whom you love and who love you really are. And I can attest that surviving it is equally magnificent.

Nowadays, simply typing a query into your search window can reveal hundreds of cases of people beating the odds against cancer. [polymvasurvivors.com](http://polymvasurvivors.com) is one such site containing the stories of real people, people you can reach out to and talk with for inspiration. Today's Internet might be the most valuable tool in your arsenal against despair.

What I so desperately sought 15 years ago is available now, but I know how it felt to be alone with this prognosis. That is exactly why I'm writing this. For the newly diagnosed brain tumor patient or their loved ones. I'm here for whenever you need to talk to someone who has made it through 15 years and is still going strong. Write me an email. I'll write you back. I'll give you a call if that's what you'd prefer. I won't push Poly MVA, but I will tell you (here) that it continues to save my life and it's entirely non-toxic and that it's the best anti-oxidant I know of and it costs a lot less than it did when I started taking it in 1997, and that you can take it, as I did, as an adjuvant to conventional treatments and it will lessen the harm done by those treatments.

## Chronological History of my Journey

### Saint Patrick's Day, 1997

Saint Patrick's Day, 1997. I received the news of my recurrent brain tumor with dread and shock. **It had come back after six years, almost to the day, and this time it wasn't a low grade Oligodendro Astrocytoma but a GBM.** I imagined what I had before was just a mere Tyrannasaurus, now I had a head full of Velociraptors. The doctors considered my case a medical anomaly, but that was certainly no comfort. **I was very despondent. I felt hopeless; the GBM support group I attended** (for the first and last time in the basement of Boston's Brigham and Women's Hospital) **only magnified my sense of doom.**

Although the left-frontal lobe tumor was operable and was resected on April 7th using the latest surgical techniques, **the prognosis remained grim.** Radiation followed by PCV Chemotherapy was the prescribed post-operative therapy. When I asked the surgeon **'How long have I got to live?'** he could only answer "That depends on how you respond to the therapy. We don't know. Right now, all we can do is throw everything at this and hope for the best."

I was desperate to know that somebody had survived this nightmare. **My father, a doctor involved in alternative medicine, sent me my first bottle of Poly-MVA only a week after my surgery.** I started taking it immediately along with the conventionally prescribed treatments recommended by my surgeon.

My first post-op, post-radiation scan was on July 25th and was clean!

I relocated from Boston to Phoenix to continue with part two: chemotherapy, and to be with my family for The End, that I was sure was coming soon. In spite of my clean scan and the fact that the doctors in Phoenix downgraded my diagnosis to an Oligo 4/4 (less of an anomaly but not much less of a threat), I was still given over to the idea that it was just a matter of time before it came back to finish me off. **The irony is that I was so certain of my imminent death, that I decided to stop paying taxes.** You know that old saying about Death and Taxes being the only sure things in life?

Now I am paying for my doubt in Poly-MVA, but I can't say I mind it at all! **I have had clean MRI scans to this day and I consider Poly-MVA - plus my belief in God's great wisdom - to be the cornerstones of my recovery.** I used to associate St. Patrick's day with gloom, now I celebrate it as the beginning of my lucky streak! A new chance at life.

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## 2nd UPDATE:

September 7, 2000

I got the results back from last night's MRI. I am still clear and clean. My neurooncologist said I may now space the scan intervals from three to four months! And to think I started out with a scan every two months... Thank You God!!

The immobilizing fear that once gripped me is beginning to lose its hold on my life. Someday, I hope to be free of it entirely. That goal is made possible for me by just two things: my Higher Power and Poly-MVA. I know this to be true.

Keeping The Faith Alive,

Mark Olsztyn

**3rd UPDATE:**

January 9, 2001

Hello Dear Friends and Family Members,

**I want to inform everyone who is near and dear to me that I have had my 16th clean scan.**

Yesterday confirmed what I could only hope was true, there are no changes from the last one that was done last September.

In these cases there is literally no room for "improvement," all you want is that things remain as they are, which for me means no signs of any growth. The physician I spoke with was optimistic. I just need to keep doing what I'm doing. To keep on keeping on.

Love to All

Marko

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**4th UPDATE:**

May 9, 2001

To All Who Seek Hope

I am very happy to report that I have had my 17th clean scan since my operation, in 1997, to remove a grade IV Oligodendroastrocytoma of the left frontal lobe. My doctors are very encouraged by my status and I believe that means that they think my prognosis is improved. I just can't get them to actually say that. What matters most is that I think so. I feel very confident that I will reach the ten year mark, a watershed set for me by many gloom-and-doom allopathic statisticians who informed me that only five to seven percent make it that far.

I plan on going at least another 65 years. I want to see my great-grandchildren!

Marko

## 5th UPDATE:

October 3, 2001

Dear Friends and Family Members,

Yesterday I received news that my latest scan, my eighteenth since my operation, was, once again, clean.

I am grateful but not surprised, so I feel more joyful than elated and relieved. Somehow, this time I knew with nearly absolute certainty what the results would be before I saw them for myself.

Over the past few months, with no real concerted effort on my part, I have undergone a subtle but significant transformation that has given me real peace of mind and spirit. I can't say for sure what the catalyst for it was, I only know that I am changed. whether it lasts or not only time will tell, but I feel that I am on a clearly marked path that is leading me to something good.

I would like to acknowledge all of you who have supported me in my struggle with cancer either by praying for me or by wishing me well and thinking of me fondly. It's all good, and I thank each one of you for your contribution to my wellness.

God bless you all.

Mark

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## 6th UPDATE

Scan Number 19 (February 26, 2002) was Clean (again).

It gives me enormous satisfaction to report that my last MRI, performed under the full moon (it's a ritual that comforts me) in Phoenix, Arizona's Barrow's Neurological Institute, **was unchanged**. No sign of any abnormal growth, just a hole in the familiar gray salmon steak that

is my brain when it is viewed on the lateral axis. That makes nineteen now since my operation in April of 1997. It will soon be five years since my diagnosis and I am as cancer-free as I can possibly be. I look forward to the mid-way point and to sharing my progress with everyone concerned with it.

Each day is a gift that I am grateful for, each moment is a fugwalha. -

Mark

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**7th UPDATE**  
May 15, 2004



Mark and his family enjoying a visit to Heidelberg Castle. May 15, 2004."

My last scan was unchanged.

So similar was it to the one before and, for that matter, to the one before that and, well, all the scans since about 1998 that my doctor felt I am at the point where I can space them out to one per year. Now, unless you happen to know this man, it is difficult to describe the optimism in my prognosis that his decision conveys. He is, after all, the Chief of Neurooncology and as such doesn't often see cases like mine which go from requiring a scan every two months to one per year within the span of five years.

It was six years, almost to the day, between my first brain tumor in April of 1991 and its recurrence as something considerably more dire in April of 1997. Though, statistically, the odds are still against me I already know that I will be tumor-free this April, six years from the date of my last operation, when my wife and my two children and I will be walking on the pebbly beaches of the Côte d'Azure celebrating those three precious, God given gifts: Life, Health and Family.

Mark

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### **8th UPDATE:**

March 18, 2007

I am fast approaching my tenth year without cancer. When I consider that I barely made it past year six when I had the recurrence from which I have been recovering these past ten, I realize what a milestone awaits this extraordinary span of wellbeing and good fortune. And yet, I know that the fight is not over. Despite the prognostications we've all heard almost every week that cancer has finally been cured or that the vaccine has been discovered, it might never be over for as long as I draw breath. Knowing this has not diminished the significance of the day for me or my accomplishment. To survive ten years without a recurrence was my goal. **On April 7 of this glorious year I will touch down.** My most vulnerable desire will become fulfilled.

It will be a Saturday that marks my anniversary, a day preordained for celebration with family. How perfect. How roseate. How ordinary, just like any other Saturday. As monumental an event as it is to me I have to accept that it will pass without festivity or even a comment from those closest to me. It might have been different if only... (I don't know how to complete this thought.)

**I have been blessed and I consider myself extremely lucky to be alive but not everything in my life is as I would like it to be.** My wife, my sole partner for over half my life, wants to go her own way now. Our two children, mere infants ten years ago, have grown into two distinct adolescents with their own talents and tendencies. They have demonstrated their concern about our decision to separate but have not displayed anything like opposition to the idea.

Looking back, **it is clear that the fissure lines of our relationship were the direct result of my illness.** It would be impossible for me to measure the magnitude of shock Belinda felt at seeing me, her partner, a once perfectly healthy 26 year-old man, suddenly writhing in the throes of a grand mal seizure and then, just a few hours later, learning that this horrifying display was caused by a malignant brain tumor. That was in 1991 and it was only the first one, a comfortably low-grade oligo. We were both much more resilient back then. Our ability to withstand and recover from this difficulty would be tested over the next six years until the day we both were informed that it had come back. By that time we were married and I was working full time. Josephine, the first of our two children, prompted our hasty union in 1995 and our second, Nicolas, was not yet two months old on that black Monday in March. It was St. Patrick's Day and the green shirt I wore to work on that day would be one I would never want to see again. There was no luck for me on that day, only the nauseating, slow realization that some things can't be outrun, no matter how far you've managed to distance yourself from the past.



**Mark with his kids, Josephine & Nicolas**

"What doesn't kill you makes you stronger" is a trite expression but it applies to my marriage and to my life. **Cancer killed my marriage but it has made me stronger.** It has been my acquiescent companion, in many ways the center of my life. It has given me a purpose, to survive and to tell anyone who will listen that it is weak. It can be defeated, routed or at least pinned down indefinitely until something else comes along to escort it out of your body. I believe this statement applies to Poly MVA.

[By now, you should already know that "Poly" is a thoroughly non-invasive, completely nontoxic treatment specifically formulated to fight cancer and that only we survivors are allowed to say that without fear of federal prosecution.]

I have been using it every day since I returned from Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston on a blustery April afternoon in 1997, to my small apartment in Watertown where my two children, Desmond, our cat, my wife and a box containing **six bottles of Poly MVA were waiting for me**. I have been scanned regularly and the news is always the same.

"Whatever it is that you're doing," say the doctors, "you should continue it." Most of them really don't want to know what it is that I am doing. I've given up trying to tell them. My message is for you, not for the doubting physicians with their cynicism and blind faith in pharmacology.

**My message is for all of you desperate and terrified cancer patients, my extended family. I was once just like you. Hear me! Do all you can to support your immune system. That is the first step.** Apply the Hippocratic Oath to yourself: First, do no harm. Your body knows how to eradicate this disease, it just needs your help. You may need to radically alter your lifestyle to achieve this. If so, the benefit will be two-fold. Use Poly MVA. Your body will take notice and try to return the favor.

Treat yourself with compassion and kindness, patience and acceptance. Be tender with your heart. Care. Release your anger. Let go.

Ultimately, this is a journey you must take alone so be your own best friend along the way. Recovery is a long journey so bring plenty of water. If ever you need encouraging, consider these words from Edward Abbey: "May your trails be crooked, winding, lonesome and dangerous leading to the most amazing view. May your mountains rise into and above the clouds."

Mark

## 9th Update:

**April 7, 2010**

Dear Friends Old and New,

Many of you have contacted me over the past few years to inquire how I'm doing. This has made me a little self-conscious about how long it's been since I posted my wellness here. The long and short of it is that I am alive and well and living my dreams in Sausalito, California.

**This day marks 13 years since my operation!**

That's about **4,700 teaspoons of Poly MVA** by my calculations.

I had a routine scan some months ago-notice I'm not obsessing about the exact dates anymore?-and the results were the same. No changes. All's Quiet on the Frontal West. That "trail" Mr. Abbey wrote about is still winding, lonesome (no one can go with you on this journey) and somewhat dangerous, but I really have seen some amazing views along the way.

In August of 2008 I left Germany after seven years of misdirection and moved to Sausalito to begin a new chapter of my life, the happiest and most fulfilling one yet. My chief concern about my kids needing a father was the motivating force behind my having stuck it out all those years, but they were proving to be less and less dependent upon me. Meanwhile, my soon-to-be ex-wife was creating her own reasons to separate and we divorced amicably in 2006.

Freed now to go after the one that (almost) got away, I am living a more purposeful existence doing things that I had put off for so many years. I have a loving companion in Marianna to hike and bike with through the beautiful Marin headlands. I'm painting those hills, too.

I'm still in regular contact with my kids who, in my absence, have turned into beautiful teenagers in Germany. Thanks to the wonders of Skype we are able to see and speak with each other across all those miles free of charge.

Toward the end of 2008 I had two petit-mal seizures within five weeks, the second one on Christmas Eve. My neurologist assured me that these are not unusual or to be worried about.

2010 bodes well.



Mark with Marianna celebrating his 45th Birthday with a dozen or so friends at the Sausalito Summer Jazz Series. July 10, 2009.