CASE REPORT

Case Report: A castration-resistant terminal prostate cancer patient’s survival prolonged after practicing Falun Gong [version 1; peer review: awaiting peer review]

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Abstract

**Background:** Most metastatic prostate cancer patients receive androgen deprivation therapy (ADT) as the mainstay of treatment. Unfortunately, patients ultimately progress to castration resistance.

**Clinical finding and diagnosis:** We describe a man in his eighties who developed stage IV, M1b prostate cancer, and multiple (≥5) bone metastases who required the aid of a walker to ambulate. Without treatment, his treating physician predicted he would survive 6 months.

**Interventions and outcomes:** The patient initially responded well to treatment with ADT, but during the 80-89th week of treatment he developed castration resistance. ADT was then discontinued. He subsequently began practicing Falun Gong (FLG) as an alternative form of care. Within one year of constant practice, he became able to walk independently, his bone metastases disappeared, and he also enjoyed better psychosocial functioning. His treating physician assessed that his prostate malignancy was "clinically, under control" and "his overall functional status is excellent."

The patient survived a total of 263 weeks (61.4 months) post diagnosis, including 174 weeks (40.6 months) after developing castration resistance.

**Conclusion:** This castration-resistant terminal prostate cancer patient gained significant clinical benefits after practicing Falun Gong.

**Keywords**

Castration-resistant prostate cancer, Metastatic prostate cancer, Survival, Falun Gong, Eudaimonic well-being, Alternative medicine, Mind-body Medicine, Mindfulness
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Introduction
Prostate cancer is the second most common cancer\textsuperscript{1} and the fifth leading cause of cancer death in men\textsuperscript{1} worldwide. In the United States, it is the most prevalent cancer and the second leading cause of cancer death in men\textsuperscript{2}. The five-year overall survival in metastatic prostate cancer patients aged ≥ 75 years is 13.6\%\textsuperscript{3}. Androgen deprivation therapy (ADT), either by means of bilateral orchiectomy or the administration of a gonadotropin-releasing hormone (GnRH) agonist or antagonist, is the mainstay of treatment for metastatic prostate cancer\textsuperscript{4}. In most metastatic prostate cancer patients, ADT is initially effective, but its response is not sustained and patients ultimately progress to castration resistance\textsuperscript{3}.

In recent years there has been a growing awareness of oriental meditative approaches for health and wellness in the West. Deeply rooted in thousands of years of Chinese cultural history, Qigong is a traditional Chinese mind-body practice that uses qi (vital energy) and consciousness cultivation to achieve an optimal health state. Falun Gong (FLG) is a unique type of ancient qigong practice based on the principles of “truthfulness–compassion–tolerance”. The practice of FLG includes reading the main teachings, Zhexian Falun\textsuperscript{5} and performing five sets of slow, gentle, meditative exercises\textsuperscript{6}.

Recently, we prospectively followed a terminal stage IV prostate cancer patient in his eighties, who relapsed after ADT and then began practicing FLG. This is the first well documented castration-resistant prostate cancer case whose survival was significantly prolonged after practicing FLG.

Case report
An 80-year-old Chinese man was a retired professor at a university in the USA. He presented to a urology clinic in 2014 complaining of bone pain, fatigue, and an elevated prostate specific antigen (PSA; ranging from 94.7 to 126.6 ng/ml; normal range: 0.6–12.4 ng/ml for 75–79 years born in China\textsuperscript{7}) for one year. He had a 20-year history of hypothyroidism treated with Synthroid\textsuperscript{TM} (75µg/day), a hernia operation in 2003, and an implanted pacemaker in 2011. He had been diagnosed with benign prostate hyperplasia in 2004 and his baseline PSA values ranged from 4.1 to 8.6 ng/ml between 1996 and 2006. There was a family history of cancer. The patient required the aid of a walker to ambulate. Digital rectal exam (DRE) revealed a “very hard, very nodular and fixed prostate.” PSA was 468 ng/ml on presentation. Transrectal ultrasound exam showed the prostate to be 63×57×53 mm\textsuperscript{3} with disrupted capsule, abnormal inhomogeneous peripheral zone, scattered calcifications, and no median lobe. The prostate biopsy pathology report revealed an adenocarcinoma with a Gleason Score 9 (4+5 or 5+4) in all lobes with 40–80\% cancer infiltration (Figure 1). Whole-body bone scan was highly suspicious for numerous osseous metastases in the lumbar and thoracic spine as well as in the left iliac bone of the pelvis, some areas of the sacrum and in the left 9th rib (Figure 2). CT scan findings were consistent with the bone scan (Figure 2). The patient was diagnosed with terminal stage IV, M1b metastatic prostate adenocarcinoma with extensive (≥5) bone metastases. His treating physician predicted that without effective treatment he would have a life expectancy of only 6 months.

The patient was started on degarelix (240mg, 80mg, 80mg at month intervals) and bicalutamide 50mg daily. Survival was monitored by symptoms and serum PSA. Quality of life (QoL) was assessed with the SF-8\textsuperscript{TM} questionnaire (Table 1). Psychosocial functioning was evaluated using an adapted, simplified six-part questionnaire that assessed the patient’s status of positive thinking, happiness, altruism, emotional control and purpose of life. All these parameters have been systemically researched in a number of mindfulness psychological studies and commonly used in psychosocial functioning outcomes\textsuperscript{6} (Table 2).

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Figure 1. Core biopsy of the patient’s prostatic adenocarcinoma (hematoxylin and eosin stain). The adenocarcinoma consists of poorly formed or fused glandular acini (Gleason grade 4) and aggregates, cords and solid foci not recognizable as acini (Gleason grade 5), resulting in the Gleason score of 9 (4+5). The Gleason score is the sum of two most prevalent histologic grades in a prostate adenocarcinoma, rated on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the most clinically aggressive.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{1}http://gco.iarc.fr/today/online-analysis-pie?v=2018&mode=cancer&mode_population=continents&population=900&populations=900&key=tot_al&sex=1&cancer=39&type=1&statistic=5&prevalence=0&population_group=0&ages_group=5B%5D=0&ages_group=5B%5D=17&nb_items=7&group_cancer=1&include_nmsc=1&include_nmsc_other=1&half_pie=0&donut=0&population_group_globocan_id=\textsuperscript{2}http://gis.cdc.gov/Cancer/USCS/DataViz.html\textsuperscript{3}https://falundafa.org/eng/pdf/ZFL2014.pdf\textsuperscript{4}http://en.falundafa.org/eng/html/dymf_2014/dymf_2014_2.htm}
Figure 2. Comparison of whole-body bone scan and spine CT images before and after Falun Gong (FLG) practice. Upper Row: before FLG practice (May-2014); Lower Row: after FLG practice (Nov-2016); Left and Middle Columns: anterior and posterior views of the bone scan; Right Column: post-processed (Multiplanar Reformation) Spine CT. The yellow arrows denote the normal uptake level of tracer corresponding to the original bone metastatic foci in the upper row, as shown at the sites of the left 9th rib region, thoracic vertebra (T7, also shown on CT image), sacral vertebrae region, and left iliac region, indicating the disappearance of cancer. The blue arrows denote degenerative bone regions with mild increased tracer uptake in sternum region and lumbar spine region but without evidence of neoplastic lesions. Degenerative appearances of bone and joint were also observed in the upper and lower extremities (bone scan) as well as in the spine (CT image).

The patient’s bone pain was gone within 5 days. After five weeks, his PSA dropped to 4.5 ng/ml. At week 14, degarelix was replaced with leuprolide acetate at a dose of 22.5 mg quarterly. PSA levels remained at 0-0.2 ng/ml until week 68. At week 80, his PSA rose to 1.4 ng/ml, and his physician discontinued bicalutamide due to suspicion of cancer relapse. PSA continued to increase to 2.4 ng/ml at week 84 and to 3.7 ng/ml at week 89. (Figure 3, Table 3)

The physician planned to use abiraterone acetate plus prednisone or enzalutamide if the PSA rose to 10 ng/ml. The patient was not pleased with either choice because of the increased risk of side effects and limited survival benefits. ADT was then discontinued. At week 89, the patient began practicing FLG. When he watched the FLG video for the first time, the patient reported that he felt as if substantial high energy matter was plugged into his two lower legs. He could sense the flow of energy and the warmth induced by the energy during practicing. In the past, during cold winter nights, the patient had a tendency to get cramps in his legs. To prevent this, he had been using a hot water bottle under the quilt while sleeping for many years. Soon after starting to practice FLG, the patient reported he did not need a hot water bottle anymore.

At week 94, the patient’s PSA reversed its increasing trend by dropping to 0.6 ng/ml (Figure 3, Table 3). At week 106, he no longer needed the assistance of a walker. At weeks 130 and 133, no osseous metastases were seen on either CT or whole-body bone scan (Figure 2). At week 151, DRE revealed that the prostate was softer and smaller than before. The patient’s QoL improved greatly with FLG practice (Table 1). He was even able to go up a 14-step stairway without stopping halfway or developing shortness of breath with exertion on stairs he had before practicing FLG (Extended data: Video S1). Additionally, the patient reported the following sequential trend of psychosocial functioning improvement: starting FLG practice, finding the purpose of life, developing positive thinking, having a better temperament, experiencing symptom improvement, feeling happier and less depressed, and becoming more altruistic (Table 2). At week 219, based on the extended survival, absence of symptoms, disappearance of bone...
Table 1. SF-8™ evaluation at baseline and during Falun Gong (FLG) practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Original questions</th>
<th>Quantitative transformation of qualitative answers</th>
<th>At onset of cancer</th>
<th>One month before FLG practice</th>
<th>Apr 2017</th>
<th>Dec 2017</th>
<th>Jul 2018</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical health</td>
<td></td>
<td>6 5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General health</td>
<td>Overall, how would you rate your health?</td>
<td>Excellent Very good Good Fair Poor Very poor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical function</td>
<td>How much did physical health problems limit your usual physical activities (such as walking or climbing stairs)?</td>
<td>- Not at all Very little Somewhat Quite a lot Could not do physical activities</td>
<td>2*</td>
<td>3*</td>
<td>5*</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role physical</td>
<td>How much difficulty did you have doing your daily work, both at home and away from home, because of your physical health?</td>
<td>- Not at all A little bit Some Quite a lot Could not do daily work</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodily pain</td>
<td>How much bodily pain have you had during the past 4 weeks?</td>
<td>None Very mild Mild Moderate Severe Very severe</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td></td>
<td>- 5 4 3 2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td>How much have you been bothered by emotional problems (such as feeling anxious, depressed or irritable)?</td>
<td>- Not at all Slightly Moderately Quite a lot Extremely</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social function</td>
<td>How much did your physical health or emotional problems limit your usual social activities with family or friends?</td>
<td>- Not at all Very little Somewhat Quite a lot Could not do social activities</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role emotion</td>
<td>How much did personal or emotional problems keep you from doing your usual work, school or other daily activities?</td>
<td>- Not at all Slightly Moderately Quite a lot Extremely</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitality</td>
<td>How much energy did you have?</td>
<td>- Very much Quite a lot Some A little None</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* After onset of cancer and before practicing FLG, the patient was short of breath after climbing a 14-step staircase and had to rest midway to catch his breath. At week 187, he could go up the same 14-step staircase without stopping halfway and was no longer short of breath after reaching the top.
**Table 2. Psychosocial functioning evaluation.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compared to before practicing Falun Gong (FLG):</th>
<th>At Week 154</th>
<th>At Week 218</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Do you think more positively now?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Do you feel happier or less depressed?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Have you become more altruistic?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Have you found the purpose of life?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Do you have a better temper?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Would you please relate the chronological sequence for the spiritual-mental changes (as noted in questions 1-5) and your symptomatic improvements after starting FLG practice?</td>
<td>The subject related the following sequence of events: 1. Starting FLG practice; 2. Finding purpose of life; 3. Thinking more positively; 4. Developing a better temper; 5. Experiencing symptomatic improvement; 6. Becoming happier and less depressed; 7. Becoming more altruistic.</td>
<td>The subject confirmed with the same answers as Week 154.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Figure 3. Prostate specific antigen (PSA) at baseline, and during androgen deprivation therapy and Falun Gong practice.** In 1996-2006 the patient's PSA was 4.1–8.6 ng/ml. Before ADT, his PSA was 468 ng/ml. PSA decreased to 0 within five weeks after ADT and remained at < 0.9 ng/ml. At week 80, PSA increased to 4.4–8.2 ng/ml, within his baseline levels (4.1–8.6 ng/ml) in 1996–2006. Each point stands for the PSA recorded at various times and the step size in time is not even.
### An overview of symptoms, medical examinations, treatment and Falun Gong (FLG) practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Testosterone (ng/dL)</th>
<th>Symptoms / Images / Physical Examinations / Diagnosis</th>
<th>PSA (ng/mL)</th>
<th>FLG practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010-05</td>
<td>Not tested</td>
<td>Bicalutamide</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-01</td>
<td>Not tested 27.5</td>
<td>Bone mineral density scan was normal.</td>
<td>-174</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-04</td>
<td>Not tested 36.2</td>
<td>DRE showed asymmetric enlargement of the right gland, with nodular and firm right lobe.</td>
<td>-115</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-07</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>Bone mineral density scan was normal.</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-04</td>
<td>94.7</td>
<td>DRE showed very hard, very nodular and fixed. Diagnosed as Stage 13c prostate cancer.</td>
<td>126.6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-07</td>
<td>97.7</td>
<td>Bone pains. Whole body scan was highly suspicious for numerous osseous metastases in the lumbar and thoracic spine.</td>
<td>94.7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-11</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Needed a walker to ambulate. Biopsy revealed adenocarcinoma with Gleason score 9 (4+5 or 5+4) for all lobes.</td>
<td>94.7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-10</td>
<td>Not tested</td>
<td>Bone mineral density scan was normal.</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-05</td>
<td>Not tested</td>
<td>Needed a walker to ambulate. Biopsy revealed adenocarcinoma with Gleason score 9 (4+5 or 5+4) for all lobes.</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-06</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Needed a walker to ambulate. Biopsy revealed adenocarcinoma with Gleason score 9 (4+5 or 5+4) for all lobes.</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-07</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Needed a walker to ambulate. Biopsy revealed adenocarcinoma with Gleason score 9 (4+5 or 5+4) for all lobes.</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-08</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Needed a walker to ambulate. Biopsy revealed adenocarcinoma with Gleason score 9 (4+5 or 5+4) for all lobes.</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-09</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Needed a walker to ambulate. Biopsy revealed adenocarcinoma with Gleason score 9 (4+5 or 5+4) for all lobes.</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-03</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Required a walker to ambulate. Biopsy revealed adenocarcinoma with Gleason score 9 (4+5 or 5+4) for all lobes.</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-04</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Needed a walker to ambulate. Biopsy revealed adenocarcinoma with Gleason score 9 (4+5 or 5+4) for all lobes.</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-11</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Needed a walker to ambulate. Biopsy revealed adenocarcinoma with Gleason score 9 (4+5 or 5+4) for all lobes.</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-12</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>Needed a walker to ambulate. Biopsy revealed adenocarcinoma with Gleason score 9 (4+5 or 5+4) for all lobes.</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-01</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>Needed a walker to ambulate. Biopsy revealed adenocarcinoma with Gleason score 9 (4+5 or 5+4) for all lobes.</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>PSA (ng/mL)</td>
<td>Testosterone (ng/dL)</td>
<td>Symptoms / Images / Physical Examinations / Diagnosis</td>
<td>FLG Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-01</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>Needed a walker to ambulate.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-03</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>&gt; 0.1</td>
<td>Needed a walker to ambulate.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-05</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>&gt; 0.1</td>
<td>Needed a walker to ambulate.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-06</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>&lt; 0.1</td>
<td>No longer need a walker to ambulate.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-11</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>No longer need a walker to ambulate.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-10</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>&lt; 0.1</td>
<td>No longer need a walker to ambulate.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-09</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>&lt; 0.1</td>
<td>No longer need a walker to ambulate.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-08</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>&lt; 0.1</td>
<td>No longer need a walker to ambulate.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-07</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>No need for walker</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-04</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>No need for walker</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-05</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>No need for walker</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-04</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>No need for walker</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-07</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>No need for walker</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-08</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>No need for walker</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-09</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>No need for walker</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-10</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>No need for walker</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-04</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>No need for walker</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-05</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>No need for walker</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1.5</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-07</td>
<td>263</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-05</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>No need for walker</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

He had a car accident resulting in a severe neck injury. His head was bent almost 90 degrees forward. Despite wearing a neck brace, he could only look towards the ground. He walked slowly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Testosterone (ng/dL)</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>PSA (ng/mL)</th>
<th>FLG Practice</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-06</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

His head was bent almost 90 degrees forward. Despite wearing a neck brace, he could only look towards the ground. He walked slowly.
metastases, improved QoL and psychosocial functioning, his treating physician assessed that his prostate malignancy was “clinically, under control” and “his overall functional status is excellent.” The patient reported to be living a healthy life with good physical and mental status. He shared his experience as a terminal cancer survivor in the hospital support group as well as with the local medical community.

On week 228, the patient had a car accident which resulted in a severe neck injury and decreased ability to walk. On week 263, the patient was found dead at home from unknown causes. Three days before his death, he had spoken with us and denied any signs or symptoms of cancer relapse.

**Discussion**

The case presented here is a castration-resistant metastatic prostate cancer patient in his eighties. Prostate cancer patients receiving ADT inevitably develop castration-resistance within a median relapse time of 18 months due to prostate cancer cells developing mechanisms to proliferate despite castrate levels of testosterone. M1 castrate-resistant prostate cancer patients with a high number of skeletal metastasis (≥25) have a considerably poorer progression-free survival of 8.4 months and overall survival (OS) of 18.7 months, compared to patients with 1-4 bone metastases.

The terminal prostate cancer patient in our case had a Gleason Score 9, a PSA of 468 ng/ml, and high number of bone metastases (≥25). Even with an initial response to ADT treatment, he still became castration resistant. After starting FLG practice, his PSA came down, he could walk independently, and his bone metastases disappeared within a short time frame. After developing castrate resistance and stopping ADT, he survived for an additional 174 weeks (40.6 months), which is far longer than the reported OS of 18.7 months in patients with similar clinical conditions. The close temporal relationship between FLG practice and significant cancer improvement and the absence of any other treatment after starting FLG practice suggest that FLG practice resulted in a holistic and beneficial effect in this terminal prostate cancer patient. Moreover, the patient reported a good QoL free of cancer symptoms until he died of a non-cancer related cause, possibly due to the sequela of his severe car accident and/or his pacemaker-related cardiac condition.

As the pituitary-gonadal system is usually restored within 4 to 12 weeks after leuprolide acetate is discontinued, the later rise in the patient’s most recent PSA level might reflect his baseline PSA levels of 20 years ago. Additionally, PSA levels are also known to increase with age. A cohort study (the Concord Health and Ageing in Men Project, CHAMP) involving a representative sample of 1434 eligible community-dwelling men with no diagnosis of prostate cancer reported a 5th to 95th percentile range of 0.6–12.4 ng/ml of serum PSA level in men aged 75–79 and born in China.

While there are anecdotal testimonies from terminal cancer patients revealing they survived longer than expected after practicing FLG, this is the first case report documented with detailed medical records. According to the canon of traditional Chinese medicine, the *Yellow Emperor’s Classic of Medicine*, people may enjoy a long, disease-free life by cultivating the mind and following upright moral principles. The emerging discipline of psychoneuroimmunology has begun to disclose the relationship between psychological, neurological and immunological systems. For example, eudaimonic well-being is found to be associated with decreased expression of transcriptional response to adversity profile involving inflammation mediated neoplastic diseases, decreased tumour growth and progression–related norepinephrine. The patient presented here experienced symptom improvement soon after reading *Zhuan Falun* and accepting the principles of “truthfulness–compassion–tolerance”, suggesting that the improvement of moral and spiritual character also plays a significant role in the improvement of health.

**Conclusions**

We describe in detail for the first time in the medical literature, the clinical course of a terminal prostate cancer case with relapse to ADT followed by FLG practice, an ancient Qigong practice originating from China. Most of the patient’s prostate cancer signs and symptoms disappeared quickly after FLG practice, accompanied with greatly improved psychosocial functioning and quality of life. We conclude that this terminal prostate cancer case gained clinical benefits through practicing FLG. Although the mechanism by which FLG practice caused improvement is not yet well understood, its effects are identifiable and measurable. Thus, the practice of FLG deserves more investigation by the medical community.

**Patient perspective**

“My name is XXX. I had a teaching career as an Organic Chemistry Professor for 37 years at XXX before retiring in 2000. In May of 2014, I became a final stage, metastatic prostate cancer patient with bone pain, a 468 PSA, and an estimated life expectancy of less than half a year. I also required the aid of a walker to ambulate. After 19 months of androgen deprivation therapy (ADT), my cancer relapsed. Shortly prior to that relapse, I was very fortunate to have discovered a relatively new but rapidly growing mind and body cultivation practice known as Falun Gong that came originally from China.

On January 2016, I began to seriously engage in FLG cultivation practices involving reading moral teachings from a principle guidebook of Falun Dafa entitled “*Zhuan Falun*” and performing five different sets of Qigong exercises daily. A little over a month later, my PSA reversed its rising trend and regained a stable level of 23 ng/ml.
dropped immediately to 0.6. Three months after that, I took my last Lupron treatment, thus ending the ADT therapy. After another five months, a new bone scan revealed the disappearance of metastases lesions. Today, I have been off any medicine, including cancer fighting medicine for 22 months. I am a healthy person with normal quality of life, no bone pain, full of energy, better tempered, more optimistic and positive. My own experience so far has demonstrated to my own satisfaction that cultivation of mind and body through practicing Falun Gong can be an effective healing and cost-effective way of combating cancer which is also free of undesirable side effects…

The magical effect of practicing Falun Gong had on my health made me appreciate the importance of elevating one’s moral character to be in tune with the fundamental characteristics of the universe, namely, truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance. It also made me realize that there may very well be a set of supernormal science on human body that is quite unique, subtle, and highly deserving of greater attention and further studies by modern scientists.”

Patient’s Signature, July 2018

Physician perspective

Wednesday, July 2018: Patient seen on July XX. Overall, he is doing well. He is not depressed. He has no pain. He is currently on no medical therapy for his prostate cancer. He is optimistic and functional. All other systems reviewed and otherwise negative.

Assessment: Prostate malignancy: Clinically, under control. His overall functional status is excellent. Patient is comfortable with his spiritual approach to care.

Consent

Written informed consent for the publication of this case report and any associated images was obtained from the patient before his death.

Data availability

Underlying data

All data underlying the results are available as part of the article and no additional source data are required.

Extended data

Figshare: A castration-resistant terminal prostate cancer patient survived significantly longer and walked independently after practicing Falun Gong. https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.9933296

This project contains the following extended data:

- Video S1: This patient was diagnosed with terminal stage IV, M1b metastatic prostate adenocarcinoma with extensive (≥5) bone metastases requiring the aid of a walker to ambulate. During treatment, he developed castration-resistance. After practicing Falun Gong, his bone metastases disappeared and he became able to walk independently. This video was taken three and a half years after the diagnosis of terminal cancer was made and less than two years after he started to practice Falun Gong. The patient walked up a 14-step stairway without stopping halfway and did not experience the shortness of breath with exertion on stairs he had before practicing Falun Gong.

Data are available under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (CC-BY 4.0).

Acknowledgements

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References


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