

David Servan-Schreiber

Author of a bestselling book that promotes natural cures for cancer

David Servan-Schreiber, already successful as a psychiatric and neuroscience researcher at the University of Pittsburgh, was 31 years old when the unthinkable happened. It was autumn 1992. He and two colleagues had planned to conduct research using magnetic resonance imaging, but a student “guinea pig” had failed to show up. Dr Servan-Schreiber volunteered to lie down in the scanner for the experiments, his arms tight at his sides, “a little like [in] a coffin,” he later wrote in his bestselling book *Anticancer: A New Way of Life*. Before the experiment was over, a colleague in the control room told Servan-Schreiber over the intercom, “Listen, there’s something wrong. We’re coming in.”

It was malignant

Servan-Schreiber, a native of France who the year before had worked in Iraq with Médecins Sans Frontières, studied the images of his brain. He saw “a sort of a ball the size of a walnut” in the right hand region of his prefrontal cortex. Follow-up tests confirmed his fears: it was malignant. “No longer wrapped in the comfortable mantle of physician and scientist, I had become a cancer patient,” he wrote.

He underwent successful surgery, and the cancer went into remission. But in 2000 the cancer returned. After more surgery and chemotherapy he asked his oncologist for advice on leading a healthy life and avoiding another relapse. He was told there was “nothing special to do. Lead your life normally.”

Servan-Schreiber, by then a clinical associate professor and chief of psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, Shadyside Hospital, was not happy with the advice. A founding board member of the US branch of Doctors Without Borders, he had been exposed to traditional Asian medicine, such as acupuncture, meditation, and nutrition, while on a mission to Tibet. “I decided to learn everything I could to help my body defend itself against the illness,” he wrote. He knew chances of long term survival were not good but vowed to use his medical and research skills to “change the odds.”

He came to believe that the body has natural defences to “fight the process of tumour development” noting the lower rates of breast, colon, and prostate cancer in much of Asia compared with

the West. His first book, *Healing Without Freud or Prozac: Natural Approaches to Curing Stress, Anxiety and Depression*, was published in 2003.

Four years later, he published *Anticancer*, which told his story and those of other patients with cancer. He advocated a natural and holistic lifestyle that included a healthy diet with foods such as vegetables, olive oil, garlic, and green tea, which he believed had anticancer properties, as well as plenty of exercise and optimism. The book became an international best-seller translated into more than 30 languages. He became a hero to other patients with cancer and their families, speaking around the world and writing for magazines and his website (www.anticancerbook.com).

Edouard Servan-Schreiber, his brother, said that after the first relapse in 2000, David was not fighting the cancer in attempt to defeat it but rather was focusing on “living with the cancer,” accepting that in the end the cancer would win and that he would die. “In his mind,” Edouard said, “it was a question of, ‘How should I live my life? Do I give up or do I do all I can to extend and live my life fully?’”

However, many remained sceptical of Servan-Schreiber’s anticancer message. A review written by a doctor in the *New York Times* described the book as “worthy of the finest in nighttime television infomercials, where among all the financial advisers, kitchen gadget guys and acne specialists is one with a story so personal, heartfelt and sensible that you suddenly need exactly what he has to sell” (2008 Sep 6, www.nytimes.com).

Edouard said that his brother had no hard feelings about such scepticism. “He felt that scepticism is what moves science forward,” he said. But he added that his brother also felt that

natural methods for preventing cancer would have trouble being embraced by the medical community because “they were not patentable. You can’t make money off of them.” Most importantly, Edouard said that his brother always recommended that patients with cancer

undergo “classical, standard medical treatments. He never recommended against using those classic weapons.”

David Servan-Schreiber was born on 21 April 1961, in the Paris suburb of Neuilly-sur-Seine into a prominent French family. After earning a bachelors degree in 1977 at the Académie de Paris, he studied medicine for four years at the University of Paris before moving to Laval University in Quebec City, Canada, where he earned his medical degree in

1984. He completed an internship in internal medicine and psychiatry at McGill University’s Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal.

“The big one”

After his second relapse in 2000, he quit daily medical practice and curtailed academic responsibilities. In June 2010 another brain tumour was found. He underwent several treatments and was in and out of the hospitals. Another tumour—“the big one,” as he described it—was found in February. Having survived for 19 years after his first diagnosis of brain cancer, he believed his methods had changed the odds, allowing him to live longer than he might have, his brother said. He leaves his wife, Gwenaëlle Briseul and three children.

Ned Stafford

David Servan-Schreiber, author (b 1961; q 1984, Laval University, Quebec City), died on 24 July 2011 from brain cancer.

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2011;343:d5128



He advocated a natural and holistic lifestyle that included a healthy diet, plenty of exercise and optimism

William Francis Monteith Fulton



Pioneer in research into the pathology of coronary heart attacks, Edinburgh and Glasgow (b 1920; q Glasgow 1945; FRCP, FRCPGlas, FRCPEd), d 21 December 2010.

In 1953-4 in Edinburgh William Francis Monteith Fulton ("Bill") first used coronary stereoarteriography to relate selective histopathology to clinical events, showing that coronary thrombosis precedes an acute heart attack. He drew all of the many illustrations in his outstanding and original book of 1965, and by 1967 had laid the foundations for thrombolysis, leading to many international lectures and landmark publications. During 1967-72 he was foundation professor of medicine in Nairobi. On returning to Stobhill Hospital, Glasgow, he established the cardiology service and coronary care unit. The most courteous of men, he had little patience with artificially imposed time limits, his patients taking precedence over bureaucracy. He leaves a wife, Frances, and two children.

Michael Oliver

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2011;343:d4830

Geoffrey Edward Heald

Former general practitioner Hulme, Manchester (b 1924; q Cambridge/London 1950; DObstRCOG, MRCP), d 25 September 2010.

Geoffrey Edward Heald chose to work singlehandedly in an inner city area. He then formed an early group practice with four neighbouring practices, in 1962 buying land from the city council to build Hulme House, one of the first custom-built doctors' premises in the north of England. By 1974 the close-knit community had been dispersed to a new estate outside town and high rise flats built in Hulme, Geoffrey staying in

the new changing community. In his spare time he painted, holding two exhibitions of his work, and was closely associated with Manchester Camerata Orchestra. He published two books of his poems and was compiling a book for his grandchildren when he died. He leaves a wife, Joan; two children; and four grandchildren.

Joan Heald

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2011;343:d4839

Edmund Neville Hey



Pioneer in the care of newborn babies, Newcastle (b 1934; q Oxford 1962; DPhil, MD, FRCP, FRCPH), died from meningitis on 7 December 2009.

Edmund Neville Hey ("Ed") made major contributions to understanding babies' physiology, the evidence base for their clinical care, and perinatal epidemiology, his work still central to clinical care and policy decisions. As senior lecturer in child health at Newcastle in 1970 he developed comparatively non-interventionist care while others developed more intrusive care. He also collected data to evaluate the outcome of care locally and regionally, and was a strong proponent of nurse led neonatal care. He retired shortly after the two newborn units in Newcastle were amalgamated in 1993 but remained active in research and took on the role of supporting doctors in difficulties, particularly those being treated unfairly by authority. Predeceased by his wife, Susan, in 1999, he leaves three children.

Alan Craft

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2011;343:d4845

Norman Macleod

Former medical director Upjohn Pharmaceuticals, Crawley, Sussex (b 1929; q Aberdeen 1952; DMRT, FFR), died from an aortic aneurysm on 30 May 2011.

Norman Macleod funded his university life with bursaries that paid



more than his first wages. His first job was as houseman at Tredegar General Hospital, South Wales, where he met his wife, Jennie. Soon after marrying Norman was posted to Kenya for two years as a medical officer. On his return, he worked in Oxford and at Royal Wolverhampton Hospital, where he was consultant radiotherapist. For the last 16 years of his employment he was medical director of Upjohn Pharmaceuticals in Crawley. When Jennie died in 1994 and was buried in Tredegar, Norman retired there to be near her and his extended Welsh family. He leaves a daughter and two granddaughters.

Norman MacLeod

Jane Johnson

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2011;343:d5082

Elizabeth McKenzie Newton (Mrs Mitchell)



Former consultant anaesthetist Schools Dental Service, Bolton, and Wrightington Hospital, Wigan (b 1916; q Edinburgh 1942; DA), d 5 March 2011. Elizabeth McKenzie Newton started her career at Winchester Emergency War Hospital and trained in surgery at Derby Royal Infirmary, where she treated soldiers wounded in the second world war. Advised at the end of the war that surgery was not an option for a woman, she trained in anaesthesia at North Middlesex Hospital. When her husband, John Mitchell, became consultant physician in Bolton she had to leave hospital anaesthesia because spouses were not allowed to work in the same hospital group. She therefore turned to dental anaesthesia, later returning to

hospital anaesthesia and becoming anaesthetist to Sir John Charnley, the pioneer hip replacement surgeon. Predeceased by John, she leaves two children and four grandchildren.

David Mitchell

Deborah Mitchell

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2011;343:d5081

William John Christopher Pearson



Former general practitioner Derby (b 1921; q Trinity College Dublin 1952), died from heart failure on 13 October 2010.

During the second world war William John Christopher Pearson ("Kit") served in the Royal Artillery and met his wife, Vivienne ("Bunny"). He entered medical school the year his daughter was born and won gold and silver medals despite sharing, by then, care of two children. In 1955 he went into singlehanded general practice in Derby, moving in 1971 to Mickleover, Derby, where he and Bunny remained on his retirement in 1985. An inspirational general practitioner, he motivated many young people to achieve their dreams. His fail-safe method of determining old age was to ask people whether they could still eat chocolate before breakfast. If the answer was yes, they were still young. Predeceased by Bunny in 2002, he leaves three children and seven grandchildren.

Felicity Scott

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2011;343:d4768

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