

Atypical cancer fighter



Sherrie Buzby/The Arizona Republic

Dr. Daniel Rubin works one day a week at the East Valley Regional Cancer Center at Chandler Regional Hospital. He adds nutritional support to cancer patients' treatment program to help fight the debilitating side effects of chemotherapy and radiation treatments.

Oncologist adds naturopathy to traditional treatments

By Alison Stanton
Special for The Republic

"If someone can live another year in good health, that is good success."

Daniel Rubin, naturopathic oncologist

As a naturopathic oncologist, Dr. Daniel Rubin spends his days working as a physician and a medical detective.

"In cancer lies the greatest mystery of human disease — my career will never be dull," he said. "That's what drives me — what is the cause for each person?"

Since November, Rubin, 35, has spent every Wednesday working at the East Valley Regional Cancer Center at Chandler Regional Hospital, 1875 W. Frye Road. He also has a private practice in Scottsdale.

Rubin offers people with cancer what he calls an "integrative approach" to treating their disease. Instead of relying solely on the services of a traditional board certified oncologist, Rubin said many patients are now looking to combine traditional methods like chemotherapy and radiation with naturopathic care.

A key benefit of this approach, Rubin said, is that patients can be "built up"

through vitamin and other nutritional therapies, which in turn may prevent them from missing out on valuable chemotherapy visits because of its often debilitating side effects.

"I think one of the big issues is that there is a degree of toxicity when going through chemo or radiation, and many have to take breaks in treatment," he said.

Rubin said that in general, most people with cancer who undergo this integrative approach do much better than those who do not.

"Co-management is the best root of treatment," he said. "People going through conventional treatment fare better when they combine responsible naturopathic medicine with traditional treatment."

Rubin doesn't know of any other doctors in the Valley who exclusively practice naturopathic oncology. "I wish there were more," he said, be-

cause you need people to talk to with a deep knowledge base."

Rather than calling his patients "cancer patients," he prefers "people with cancer."

"I believe that the tumor is not the only relative entity," he said.

"I'm treating a person with cancer."

Rubin said he tries hard to develop a relationship with every patient.

For one thing, Rubin tries to figure out what might have caused a person to develop cancer in the first place. That makes treating it and preventing it from recurring become a bit easier.

In addition to conventional treatments, Rubin uses a variety of treatment options to treat his patients. For example, he might prescribe vitamin C therapy for one person and an herbal formula for another.

Sometimes, Rubin said, a person with cancer can be

helped immensely through a change in diet or lifestyle, or through referring someone to a counseling oncology social worker, if he senses that patient is suffering from depression or other emotional trauma.

"I might not be giving them something — it might be taking away something, like eliminating something in the diet or environmental things," he said. "Cancer is in many instances a wound that doesn't heal. You need to figure out the wound so a person can heal."

Rubin, who has treated "hundreds of patients" over the years, said that for him, success is defined by meeting the goals of his patients and offering them quality of life.

"If someone can live another year in good health, that is good success," he said.

One of his patients speaks highly of Rubin's methods and his bedside manner.

"If it hadn't been for Dr. Rubin I wouldn't be here," said Arlene Krumwiede, 73, of Glendale, who has been battling cancer for six years. "Dr. Rubin has kept me built up."