

No boundaries

Have melanoma- will travel

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Title:

Immunotherapy at-home for a Patient with a Nomadic Lifestyle: A Case Study in Flexible Cancer Treatment Delivery.



Introduction:

While the concept of receiving chemotherapy or immunotherapy at home has become increasingly common in cancer care, providing domiciliary care to patients without a fixed address poses unique challenges. This case study explores the journey of a 50-year-old man diagnosed with melanoma, who embraced a nomadic lifestyle after his disease progressed to Stage 4. Despite the absence of a permanent residence, he continued his treatment regimen with chemo@home, a national home based infusion program. This case study highlights the adaptability and flexibility required in modern healthcare delivery.

Patient Profile:

The patient, originally from Broome in Western Australia, was diagnosed with melanoma in 2020. Initially his treatment involved monthly visits to Perth where he was treated by the chemo@home team with ipilimumab and nivolumab, under the care of his oncologist, at his parents' home. After completion of initial treatment, he was prescribed maintenance monotherapy with nivolumab. By 2022, the disease had progressed, manifesting as lung and spinal lesions. Undeterred by this development, he made the bold decision to sell his home, embark on a journey across Australia with his partner, and live life to the fullest. Despite his nomadic lifestyle, he remained committed to his treatment plan, and the administration of his immunotherapy by chemo@home.

Treatment Logistics:

Ensuring continuity of care for a patient constantly on the move requires meticulous planning and coordination. Routine blood tests were essential prior to each treatment cycle, necessitating collaboration with local healthcare facilities along his travel route.

The patient communicated his itinerary in advance to the state coordinator, facilitating seamless arrangements for pathology services and nursing and pharmacy support at each destination. Moreover, access to a 24-hour on-call service provided reassurance in case of any concerns or emergencies.

Treatment Response and Adherence:

Despite the logistical challenges, the patient exhibited remarkable adherence to his treatment schedule, resulting in a favourable treatment outcome, with few side effects and no notable delays. He continued his therapy with confidence, supported by both his healthcare team and his own resilience. The success of his national travels has given the patient the confidence to now plan an overseas trip, and accommodations were made by his healthcare team to facilitate his treatment needs, reflecting a patient-centered approach to care.

Outcome:

Currently undergoing his 25th treatment cycle, the patient's quality of life remains high, and he expresses profound satisfaction with his chosen lifestyle. By embracing flexibility in treatment delivery, he has not only managed his disease effectively but also embraced life to the fullest, epitomizing the notion of living beyond cancer.

Conclusion:

This case study underscores the importance of flexibility and patient-centered care in oncology, particularly in catering to the needs of individuals with unconventional lifestyles. By adapting treatment delivery to accommodate the patient's nomadic journey, healthcare providers can empower patients to maintain their treatment regimens while embracing life's adventures. Furthermore, access to a service such as this provides equity to quality cancer care for all patients, regardless of their circumstances.