

# End of Life Symposium

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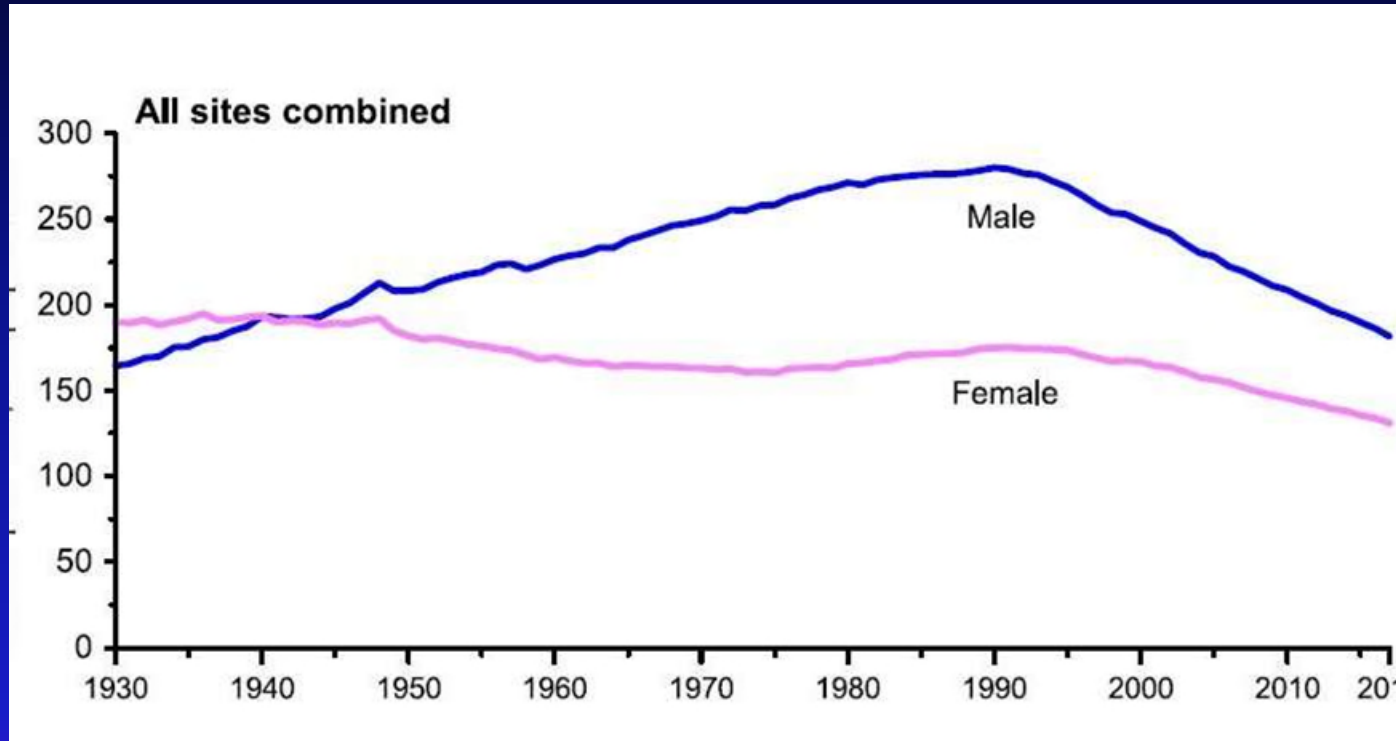
# WAR ON CANCER

- Declared by President Nixon in 1971
- This year is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary
- How are we doing in America's longest and most expensive war?
- Since 1971, ~30 million cancer patients have died

# Summary of benefits to the patient

- 68% cured
- With slash-poison-burn
- For the remaining 32% who present with advanced or aggressive disease, the outcome is no different than it was 100 years ago

# The age adjusted mortality in 2021 is the same as in 1930



The 1% annual decline is largely due to anti-smoking campaigns and screening for early detection

American Cancer Society

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-01-cancer-mortality-steady-decline-driven.html>

# Cancer and its Discontents

# The case of Andrew

- In July of 2016, he developed tingling in his right arm
- He started to exercise more
- Weakness developed and he was taken to the ER
- Quadriplegic within hours
- Neurosurgeons removed 90% of the 9cm large glioblastoma multiforme
- From this moment, all his treating oncologists knew his prognosis was hopeless

# What followed...

- Extensive surgeries, intensive rounds of chemo-radiation, immune manipulations
- More chemo-radiation therapy and more immune therapies
- He suffered the unbearable toxicities of each
- The tumors continued to grow

Alas...

We failed Andrew

He died on August 25, 2017

He was 23 years old





Sheherzad and Andrew at Stonehenge

# Cruelty or Cure?

- Was it cruel to Andrew and his family to keep suggesting ineffective agents?

# What were the alternatives?

- Enjoy whatever time he had?
- Death from cancer is too painful

# Was honesty a choice?

- Die of cancer or dies of the treatment
- Alena's best friend diagnosed with Stage 4 GBM last month
- Why are these the only two choices in 2021?
- How many Andrews have to die?



The End