Cancer is Stupid

October 2, 2008 By Paul Dalton

Yesterday I got the call from home I had been dreading for while- not the one I have been dreading for years, but the one I had been fearing since last week.

My mom has breast cancer. Again.

When I was visiting my family last week, I got a message from a nearby radiology clinic for her to call. She had breast cancer about 5 years ago and had beaten it. I gave her the message when she got home, and she put on a brave face.

?It is probably nothing, just a cyst or something,? she reassured herself and us.

Yesterday she got back the results from her biopsy and it is cancer. A different kind than last time. That is all we know at this point.

Beating cancer has become somewhat of routine for my mom. She has had lung cancer, eye cancer, breast cancer, skin cancer and now breast cancer again. She is a survivor, and is optimistic.

At the same time I was talking to my mom on the phone, my close friend J (who I wrote about here) was under the knife, having her breast cancer removed. J is a poz woman and a nurse. She knows what she has in store and is dealing with it with characteristic black humor.

?After the surgery, I will be taking tamoxafin and another drug, called an aromatase inhibitor. That will make me go through menopause, so I will likely gain a lot of weight and get hairier and sweatier..? She laughed.

J has already been suffering with body image issues since going on meds. Her experience has strengthened my sense that immune reconstitution plays a role in lipodystrophy. She waited as long as she could to start treatment, and once she did she had a rapid and large CD4 response. She also has classic lipo.

Both my mom and J are strong women- the only kind I really have in my life- and I trust that they get through this.

An update: I wrote a while back about a local HIV focused acupuncture clinic in danger of closing. There is some good news on that front. They have a new Executive Director, a new Board President and some new financing. They are good through at least the end of the year.

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