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Dr. Paul Pybus
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Dear Paul:

I have just read your letter to Perry of Feb. 7, and I would like to comment as follows. A Herxheimer reaction has always been the result of a drug killing a pathogenic micro-organism. I cannot conceive of a reaction between a drug and macrophages causing a Herxheimer reaction. Metronidazole acts against many gram negative bacteria and other protozoa.

Macrophages are involved in all kinds of inflammatory reactions. They rush in to clean up the mess in a bad trauma conducting chemical warfare as they do so. Anything that calms down the macrophage in an inflammatory reaction has an anti-inflammatory effect, however the anti-inflammatory drugs do not cause a Herxheimer reaction. I say that if there is a Herxheimer reaction, some kind of a pathogen was killed. The problem at hand I think is to grant that there cannot be a Herxheimer reaction without a pathogen. The problem then is to find the pathogen. I am certain that the macrophage has an important part of the Herxheimer reaction. It rushes in to clean up the dead organism giving off toxic chemicals as it does so, and is the main cause of the pain and inflammation of the Herxheimer reaction.

The macrophage is a most important part of our defence against cancer and I would hate to think that in treating RA with metronidazole we are playing havoc with our anti cancer defence. I just hope that metronidazole is not beating up on the macrophage as badly as Dr. Kwang Joen suggests.

Under separate cover I have mailed to you a copy of my talk. I hope to be able to make a few converts to my thinking about MI. I hope that you may be among the first. It will be good to see you in July.

BEST

