



## Editorial

**Norman Goldstein MD**  
Editor

### WORDS, WORDS, WORDS

At the time Hamlet was written, Shakespeare had 20,000 words available to express all through the English language. When President Lincoln made his famous, concise Gettysburg address, there were 114,000 English words from which to choose. Today we can find 600,000 words defined in Webster's Dictionary. When we add medical terminology and accepted words from other languages, our options have expanded forty fold since Shakespeare's time.

The late Dr. Harry L. Arnold, HMJ Editor for 41 years, was expert at using proper vocabulary. Some of my fondest controversial medical discussions appeared in print between Harry and the late NYU Professor of Dermatology, Dr. Morris Leider. It was Morris who called me the Semitic Semanticist (considered an honor, coming from him).

To communicate effectively, we often simplify our spoken language through idioms and contractions. So, instead of saying, "It is not efficacious to indoctrinate a superannuated canine with innovative maneuvers", we remark, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks." American shorthand speech reduces the phrase, "we need to dimensionalize this management initiative" to "Let's make a plan".

Simply put, let's make a plan to:

1. Keep sentences short
2. Pick simple words over complex ones
3. Choose familiar words instead of obscure ones
4. Avoid unnecessary words
5. Put action in our verbs
6. Write the way we talk
7. Use terminology that our patients can picture
8. Tie in with our patients' experience
9. Make full use of a variety of words
10. Write and speak to *express*, not *impress*!

1. Trout, J and Rivkin, S. The Power of Simplicity, McGraw-Hill Inc. and Audiotech Business Book Summaries 1999.

### Hepatitis C - Molecular Treatments and Liver Transplantation

The well designed study by Naoky C.S. Tsai, MD and Associates, "A Novel Treatment of Patients with Chronic Hepatitis C" is an example of the future of medicine. Recombinant human Granulocyte Macrophage Colony-Stimulating-Factor will undoubtedly be used for other infections and conditions in the near future. As was evidenced at the recent "Genetics and Molecular Biology - From Discovery to Practice" seminar sponsored by the Queen's Medical Center and the Ohio State University (Feb. 22-24, 1999), the age of Molecular Biology is here now, and physicians must keep up with this exciting new field of medicine.

Hepatitis C was the main reason for the liver transplantations in Linda L. Wong MD *et al's* review. Hawaii's first liver transplant was

reported in our Special Issue on Organ Transplantation five years ago by Dr. Wong and associates.<sup>2</sup> They herein report on a total of 21 transplants, 20 currently alive.<sup>3</sup>

Mahalo to Hawaii's pioneers in medicine and surgery, Naoky, Linda and their associates.

#### References

1. Tsai, N.C.S. et al "A Novel Treatment of Patients with Chronic Hepatitis C"
2. Wong, L.L. et al "Liver Transplantation in Hawaii" Hawaii Medical Journal 1994; 53(3):86-89
3. Wong, L.L. et al "Liver Transplantation in Hawaii: The Initial Five Years"



## Special Contribution

### Demanding Compliance with Living Wills

*From the Honolulu Star-Bulletin, February 23, 1999*

**A.A. Smyser**

**Contributing Editor, Honolulu Star-Bulletin**

Bill Perry's wife Pat, aged 88, as he is, looked up from a gurney at Queen's Hospital Emergency Room and told him, "I'm in horrible pain. Let me die."

In the dark of the morning soon after 5 a.m. on Dec. 31 she had been hit by a car while going to get the morning newspaper out of their mailbox in the Kahaluu area. He is a late sleeper and didn't know about it until a neighbor woke him with the news.

She was still on the street being tended by paramedics who came promptly. Perry followed the ambulance in his car. On the subject of death, Pat and Bill understood each other. They had plans for killing themselves when it seemed appropriate.

Bill knew his wife meant it when she asked to be allowed to die. He was able to get her living will faxed to the emergency room from Kaiser Koolau Clinic. A final paragraph gave him power of attorney to act for her.

He said he told the emergency personnel to get her out of pain or let her die. They said she wasn't terminal and that pain medication had to be withheld until they learned whether there was internal bleeding.

Then he did what he says he wouldn't do now - signed a form allowing surgery on her broken leg with bones protruding through the skin in order to get her pain relief.

Next time he saw her was in intensive care - unconscious and hooked up to an array of tubes and piping intended for life-saving efforts neither he nor she wanted.

When he asked to have the tubes disconnected he was told by a physician that would be euthanasia or murder.

The physician said it wasn't possible, even though Perry had his wife's living will and power of attorney and requested it. Even though friends at a hospital family conference, including their minister, supported his request. Even though their son, newly arrived from the mainland, supported it.

Finally after a second family conference following the arrival of