

THE YES TO LIFE SHOW

20
YES TO LIFE
YOUR OPTIONS FOR CANCER
CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

by Robin Daly, Founder & Chairman, Yes to Life

For this edition of Health Triangle, two of my guests from the **Yes to Life Show** have contributed articles, both about Integrative Oncology – the focus of the show – although very different. **Dr Wafaa Abdel-Hadi** is an Integrative Oncologist, based in Egypt, who for several years partnered with Patricia Daly to build metabolic programmes for cancer under the banner of AWARE clinic. Patricia died recently, leaving an inspiring legacy, and here Dr Wafaa shares her memories of a dear friend and close colleague.

Dawn Waldron has thirty years of experience in the field of cancer, first as a patient, and then as a functional nutritionist and lecturer. Recently she has moved her focus away from direct support and training to become a writer and educator, sharing her own exploration of human biology and her fascinating insights into the mechanisms of cancer. Here she writes about succinate accumulation and its role in cancer.

Robin Daly MBE

PATRICIA DALY: DEFYING ODDS AND INSPIRING THE WORLD

by Dr Wafaa Abdel-Hadi MSc IFMC-MD

I met **Patricia Daly** in 2015 by pure chance, through what began as a casual online conversation. Within minutes, it was clear this was no ordinary encounter. Our thoughts, visions, and values didn't just align – they completed each other. It was like magic.

Patricia had this unique blend of Swiss precision and Irish humour – a 'Swiss-Paddy' charm. Her presence was grounding, her laughter contagious, and her mind razor-sharp. But behind her gentle voice and kind heart was a story of resilience that not only defied medical odds but redefined what it means to live well with cancer.

For nearly a decade, Patricia and I worked side by side – researching, designing personalised protocols, and empowering patients to take charge of their health. We taught them to become the CEOs of their own bodies, blending science, strategy, and humanity. Patricia brought authenticity and lived experience; I brought clinical validation and the tools of both conventional and integrative oncology. Together, we became a force for change.

But this article is not about me. It's about celebrating the life of my best friend, my sister in spirit, and one of the most extraordinary women I have ever known.

THE DIAGNOSIS THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

In her early twenties, Patricia was a Swiss national triathlon champion and she excelled in a demanding career as a banker. She was also a devoted mother of two and wife to a true Irish gentleman.

But such a relentless pace came at a cost. Years of intense training and high-pressure work placed a chronic strain on her body, quietly weakening her immune system. On the outside, she looked the picture of health; inside, the toll of unrelenting stress was taking hold. Patricia never saw this as self-blame – instead, she used the lesson to teach others how managing stress is as vital to health as nutrition and exercise.

In July 2008, came the diagnosis that would change everything: **uveal melanoma**, a rare and aggressive eye cancer. Globally, only 60–80% of patients survive more than five years; for those who develop metastases, the prognosis is less than one year.

Faced with the choice of losing her eyesight or removing her eye entirely, Patricia refused to accept either as the final word. She underwent conventional treatment, but when the cancer recurred for the second time in 2012, she knew she had to find another way.

DISCOVERING A NEW APPROACH TO CANCER CARE

Patricia's turning point came when she discovered the work of **Professor Thomas Seyfried** and **Dr Dominic D'Agostino** – pioneers in the metabolic approach to cancer. Their research into therapeutic ketosis and metabolic therapy gave her a completely new

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perspective: cancer development is deeply rooted in metabolic dysfunction.

Both scientists generously offered their knowledge and support, and Patricia embraced their guidance with precision and curiosity. She transformed her diet, optimised her metabolic health, and integrated lifestyle strategies into every part of her life.

The results were nothing short of remarkable. Patricia didn't just slow the disease — **she lived sixteen extraordinary years with a condition that should have ended her life in a fraction of that time.**

For me, as a clinical oncologist, she was living proof that with science, courage, and strategy, even the most daunting outcomes could be rewritten into stories of hope.

Patricia's journey ignited her passion to help others. She earned her Master's degree in **Nutritional Therapy** from Middlesex University. During her training at the International Institute of Nutrition & Health (IINH), she became known for her warmth, her strength, and even her legendary homemade keto chocolates.

Her classmates created a one-time "Spirit Award" in her honour, recognising the extraordinary determination she brought to every challenge.

Her collaboration with Michelin-star nominee **Chef Domini Kemp** led to **The Ketogenic Kitchen** — a book that has guided thousands toward a therapeutic ketogenic diet without sacrificing the joy of food.

She went on to become a founding and advisory board member of the **European Keto Live Centre** in Switzerland and founded the Keto-Sport Conference to teach athletes about balanced training, recovery, and nutrition — helping them avoid the physical burnout and immune system breakdown she had once experienced.

In January 2024, we merged her work with AWARE Clinic, where she became CEO and creator of our signature Recovery Fundamentals Program. This programme distils Patricia's 16 years of experience into actionable steps that anyone, anywhere, can apply to reclaim their health. It is currently being re-recorded to make it even more accessible and easier to follow through. Working with Patricia was one of the most inspiring chapters of my career. She pushed my boundaries, and I dedicate my nomination for the **2025 Oncologist of the Year Award** by the UK charity **Yes to Life** to her continuous support and inspiration.

FACING THE FINAL CHAPTER

In July 2024, metastases appeared. Patricia and I were shocked. What happened? She had a great scan in May; we met in June that same year, and everything 'looked' normal. I did sense her stress levels were alarming, but I thought she would get over it, as she always did.

Sadly, the disease progressed rapidly, and her options were limited by what her insurance would cover. Later, her new German pathology analysis explained why her conventional treatments had accelerated the disease — but by then, there was no time to act.

Still, we never lost hope. Our dear friend **Dr Henning Saupe** sent what we needed overseas so she could receive some integrative treatments at home, surrounded by the love of her family and friends. On the night she passed away, we spoke about plans for the next day — still thinking forward until the very end. Patricia's life was about more than survival. She loved cooking, travelling, teaching, and laughing — loudly and often. She valued the small, everyday moments: the touch of her children's hands, a shared meal with friends, a walk in nature.

She transformed her diagnosis into a mission that will continue to impact lives for years to come. She was, and always will be, my hero. Her life is proof that while we cannot always choose our circumstances, we can choose how we respond — with purpose, integrity, and love. Patricia's story lives on in every patient who takes a step toward metabolic health, every athlete who trains with balance, and every family who finds hope where there was once only fear.

Rest well, my dear sister. Your light will never dim.

Listen to Dr Wafaa on the Yes to Life Show [here](#).

Dr Wafaa Abdel-Hadi is a Functional Medicine Clinical Oncologist, an international speaker and the founder of AWARE clinic, a professional educational practice that guides people on how to take charge of their health. She believes that the road to recovery only starts when we understand why this specific disease has emerged in that specific body. Analysing the imbalances and trusting in the miracle of the human body to heal when given the right tools to survive and thrive, she calls 'Reprogramming Health' by implementing the 'Fundamentals of Recovery'.

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THE STORY OF SUCCINATE: FOLLOWING THE FATE OF AN ONCOMETABOLITE

by Dawn Waldron

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Nutritionist and Nutrigenomic Counsellor

For anyone interested in cancer there exists a sort of scientific no man's land where, no matter how hard you try to insist on being 'evidence based', the ground just falls away. This is a disease where we still can't categorically define the beginning or the end, which leaves everyone involved dealing with a lot of uncertainty.

Cancer has been the focus of my professional and personal life for the past thirty years, since my own diagnosis, through retraining in nutrition and nutrigenomics, and helping three of my closest family deal with their own diagnosis.

For the past couple of years I have been exploring the importance of a short chain fatty acid called **succinate**. I was first alerted to its role in cancer while reading *Transformer*, by **Nick Lane**. He describes one of those 'penny drop' moments in his own scientific understanding when he learned that mutations in succinate dehydrogenase, a critical enzyme in energy metabolism, are frequently associated with cancer. Nick's retelling was a penny drop moment for me too.

Intrinsic to both Krebs cycle and the respiratory chain, the ability of succinate dehydrogenase (SDH) to transform succinate into fumarate is a pivotal part of our energy making apparatus. It's no coincidence, therefore, that succinate is a recognised oncometabolite; any rise in cellular or plasma succinate levels is considered bad news for the body.

To appreciate the significance of these findings we need to radically reframe our understanding of metabolism; metabolites are not just fuel

intermediaries, they are powerful signalling molecules. Instead of seeing the pathways like a tube map, with all the molecules commuting their way from A to B to C (e.g. glucose to pyruvate to lactate or acetyl coA), we need to understand that each of the metabolites along the way is hosting its own media platform, sending

news back to the body about the current state of affairs: "too much", "not enough", "we're safe", "it's scary out there"!

Succinate is not a reliable media channel. Its accumulation is interpreted by the body as a lack of oxygen. This is not a crazy conclusion as a lack of oxygen can obviously impede respiration but, in the

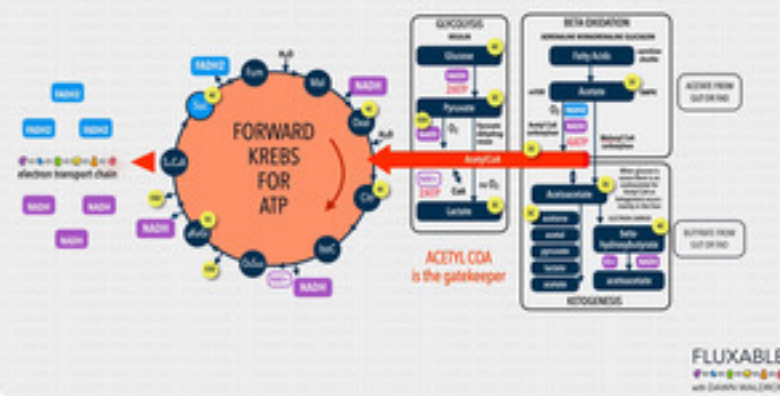
case of succinate accumulation, the cause is much more likely to be an increase in oxidative stress, or a slow down in the respiratory chain. This can happen for many different reasons, including rare SDH mutations, but also when we eat too much, move too little, and fail to manage our toxic exposure.

For those of you interested in the nitty gritty, the accumulation of succinate has been shown to activate epigenetic changes associated with cancer. It prevents the degradation of the hypoxia-inducible factor protein (produced by the HIF1A gene) which signals to the body that there is a lack of oxygen, even if there is no shortage. This sets in motion a chain of events that initiates the Warburg effect (prioritising glycolysis over oxidative phosphorylation for ATP production, even in the presence of oxygen), increases inflammation, and promotes angiogenesis. The change in biochemical gradient promotes a move to biosynthesis, and the scene is set for cancer.

For those who prefer to cut to the chase: succinate accumulation leads to cancer. It follows, then, that controlling succinate levels is an important part of any cancer prevention and recovery

EVERY MOLECULE TELLS A STORY

Molecules are not simply moving from A to B, they are part of a complex signalling network that tells the body to go faster, change direction, save more, spend more, or stop. Those signals depend on our diet and lifestyle choices as well as the environment we inhabit.



strategy. In human metabolism succinate is made only in the mitochondria. Controlling levels depends primarily on supporting healthy flux across the respiratory chain. In essence that means eating less, moving more, sleeping well, reducing toxic exposure, and avoiding metabolic disruptors.

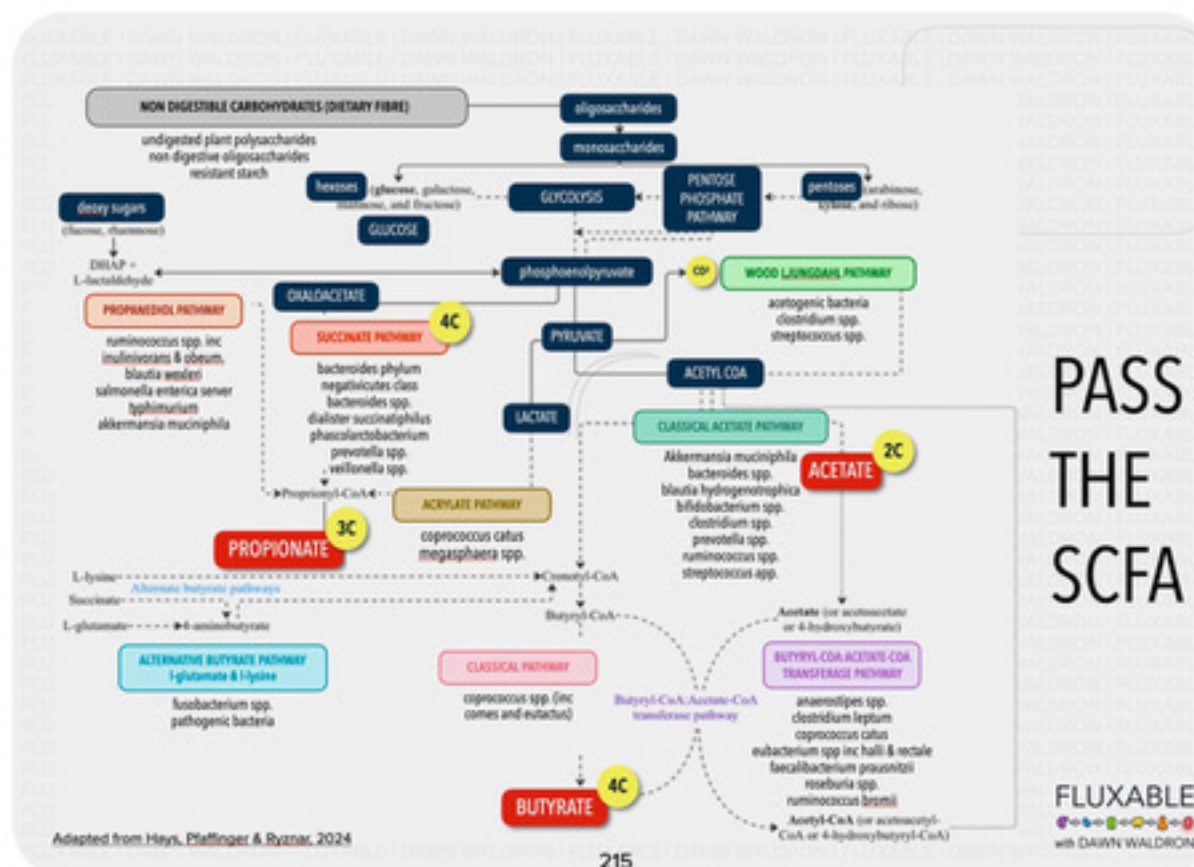
But succinate is also produced by our microbiome. It's an intermediate short chain fatty acid that is a precursor to propionate which, in turn, is a precursor to butyrate. The pathway is important because each of these conversion steps is carried out by a specific gut organism. In dysbiosis, especially when there is poor species diversity, there is a risk that the important step of converting succinate to propionate doesn't happen, leading to succinate accumulation and sending out fake news all over again. Understanding how the microbiome functions as a production line helps us to see why supplementing a narrow range of probiotics and single short chain fatty acids might lead to undesirable outcomes that impact flux across the microbiome, with knock-on effects for the mitochondria. If we eat too much propionate [frequently found in processed foods] or supplement heavily with butyrate we may inadvertently block the uptake of succinate by the microbiome, causing a build up of succinate, and

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Wishing you the very best for your health and healthcare,

Robin Daly, Founder & Chairman, Yes to Life
Presenter of the **Yes to Life Show** on **UK Health Radio**

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PASS
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FLUXABLE
with DAWN WALDRON

creating oncogenic signals in the gut. We come full circle. Neatly illustrating one of the many ways that healthy metabolism depends on healthy signalling between the mitochondria and the microbiome. It's all connected! Listen to Dawn on the Yes to Life Show [here](#).

Dawn Waldron is an award-winning nutrition and nutrigenomic specialist focussing on holistic cancer care. She writes a weekly blog on Substack providing regular and reliable insights for patients and practitioners.

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