## A smiling face replaces a heavy heart

For just about every patient with the condition, hearing the words "you've got cancer" from their doctor immediately has the mind flooded with a whole raft of questions in search of definitive and reassuring answers.

How bad is it, what sort of life can I look forward to or need to prepare for and what are my treatment options are just some of them.

It was no different for liver cancer patient Colin who recalls how difficult and confusing it all was to process the information and choose the most appropriate cancer treatment protocol.

As with most patients from the Western world, Colin's medical team had put forward chemotherapy as the most effective treatment and, naturally, he bowed to their superior knowledge and went down that path.

But it didn't quell the nagging question in his mind that surely there had to be alternatives, preferably better alterna-

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Colin, flanked by his wife Judy, left, and his daughter Jodie, is all smiles as he prepares to return home for a bit of rest and recuperation.

tives that would increase his chances of survival and enhance his quality of life.

So he set about doing his own research, scouring journals and trawling the internet while also talking to as many people – both cancer patients and others – as he could, and it slowly but surely threw up one consistent answer: Sono-Photo Dynamic Therapy (SPDT) treatment.

"It can be confronting and a little scary giving up on a treatment most common in our rather narrow world experience and choosing something not too many Westerners know about or have experienced," Colin recalls.

"But the more I learnt about SPDT the more convinced I became that it was the choice for me – and that there's a whole lot more to cancer treatment than chemotherapy.

"I was determined to give myself the very best shot at tackling and hopefully beating this disease so made the necessary arrangements and soon found myself at Dongguan RenKang Hospital in China, ready to undergo its SPDT treatment delivered by a world-renowned team of oncologists and other medical professionals."

Colin found the medical environment at the hospital, as well as the team of physicians and nurses, far exceeding even his lofty expectations. And during breaks in his treatment, he was joined by his wife and his daughter and together, they set off to enjoy the many attractions and a bit of a holiday at the reasonably-priced five-star hotel in the neighbourhood.

Of course, for Colin and all patients, getting on top of and beating cancer is the ultimate pursuit and in his case, after completing four courses of SPDT treatment, he was ready to return home for a period of rest before resuming the next phase of his recovery.

And as he packed his bags and said his farewells, he did so with optimism and a broad smile on his face – a far cry from the heavy heart he carried when he first came to China!

As his daughter Jodie says, when her father's liver metastases appeared, hopelessness perhaps best described their world.

"But dad made the right choice. After four courses of treatment at Dongguan RenKang Hospital, we clearly see from the tests that the tumour markers have dropped, while the results of the CT scan of the liver further indicate that the number of metastases has significantly reduced," Jodie says.

"Yes, we still have a way to go but we know we're heading in the right direction as dad's condition gets better and better.

"And yes, it was a long way to travel, both literally to China and figuratively to a new treatment, but it has been definitely been worth it!"