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Abscopal Outcomes

Reflections on Distant Effects

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Abscopal Outcomes

Reflections on Distant Effects

The abscopal effect, called nonsensical
when I was in medical school fifty years ago.
Now being hailed as the explanation for
distant outcomes far from the radiation site.
Complex molecular and chemical signaling
resulting in away-from-primary target responses,
molecular injury, the cellular Lyft for rides
to unsuspected places.

But why should abscopal seem so foreign
while, in the quantum world,
Schrödinger's cat lives in two boxes simultaneously.
And every morning, both a particle with mass
and a wave which has none,
illuminating our world, stretching our disbelief
about what we think and know.

And so on to those moments when
at the end-of-life the light begins to fade,
respondent to heroics
but seemingly hopeless
when the therapies have been many.

But unlike the day, the night begins
in light as if from further away,
creating hopefulness when there was none.
The right cell responding to a distant star,
striking down the malignant counterpart.

And are the physical and biological
worlds so different, both with
classical continuous and quantum discontinuous events?
Who knows, when it seems like everyday
new universes are being discovered far away
and only one of several hundred passengers
survives a fiery crash, untouched.

So don't tell me that something is nonsense...impossible.
The true creative moment that leads to deep understanding
is always a distant star, far ahead of the wave
that generates innovation, outcomes, and hopefulness,
illuminating understanding of the heart and soul of this walking,
talking primate by the warmth of the fireside.

Frank L. Meyskens, Jr., M.D., F.A.C.P.