



### Diagnosis

### Emotional Impact

### Treatment/Side Effects

### Survivorship

### Patient Stories

#### Medical Catastrophe

The New York Times reported “The life-threatening injury to Damar Hamlin of the Buffalo Bills during a game against the Bengals, televised on “Monday Night Football,” resonated around the league and the world of sports.”

On January 2nd, when Damar Hamlin’s heart stopped and his tragedy became common knowledge, it seemed like most Americans paused. They absorbed what took place and millions of them reacted the same way. They prayed for Hamlin’s recovery and thus became the largest intercessory prayer group in history.

Hamlin’s teammates did the same thing. They gathered in a circle and they, too, said the same prayer. And everyone’s prayer began with “Dear God.”

#### An Incredible Result

After one week in the hospital Hamlin walked out...seemingly okay. Doctors said the recovery was “incredible”. But others said “miraculous,” perhaps crediting his recovery to the power of so many prayers.

Since the 1800s, groups of people, all focusing their common prayer on one individual, have been studied by scientists looking for credible evidence that prayer can have a medical impact and bring about better outcomes.

#### Scientific Testing

The largest test case for the power of prayer was conducted over several years with thousands of people praying for a handful of hospital-bound patients to have a better outcome. This is known as the “Harvard Study”.

The result of this study indicated that the power of prayer did not make much difference in outcome, and wound up putting a damper on further efforts to look for medical results from the power of prayer.



Flash forward to today, when we have all witnessed the seemingly miraculous experience of Damar Hamlin. It seems this is very likely to reignite the debate over the power of prayer.

#### Patient’s Own Prayers

Another dimension of the intersection between prayer and medicine takes place when a patient—say a cancer patient—is praying for their own recovery.

Once again, the oncologist looks for evidence that the patient’s tumor is shrinking at a rapid rate—more rapid than what any anti-cancer therapy

could produce. And the prospect of this kind of tumor reduction has been tested by science, time and again

What these examinations have shown is that prayer by a patient does improve their quality of life — known as QoL—and that it has an impact on the patient’s resolve to battle their disease. What this amounts to, in the most simply stated terms is the “power of positive thinking”.

#### Patient Empowerment

For 20 years, the counselors and patient navigators at Fighting Chance have been encouraging patients to take steps toward self empowerment.

Our two free publications - - the *Cancer Journey Guide* and the *Resource Directory* - - help patients educate themselves about cancer and its treatment, and offer coping strategies and a list of providers with contact info.

But, aside from the practical steps our patients take, we have witnessed and can attest that prayer can certainly be one very strong component of self-care.

Fighting Chance has offices in  
Sag Harbor and at the  
Phillips Family Cancer Center  
in Southampton.

For more details, or information  
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Visit our website at  
[www.fightingchance.org](http://www.fightingchance.org)