

1. Provide a brief abstract or summary of your Honors in Action project including the following components: academic research and analysis, leadership roles, leadership development, action, collaboration, reflection and outcomes.

"You have cancer" is a diagnosis no one wants to hear. Modern engineered therapies include chemotherapy and radiation. Are the engineered therapies most effective? Our research revealed several studies in the United States and other countries which conclude chemotherapy/radiation treatments may shorten life expectancy rather than extend it. Thomas Edison proclaimed in 1903, "The doctor of the future will no longer treat the human frame with drugs, but rather will cure and prevent disease with nutrition." We questioned whether natural remedies may be a better option. Through academic research and analysis, we discovered how the world works by examining nutrition and its power to boost the immune system to fight and prevent cancer. We formed three subcommittees: Research, Interview, and Action. We attended conferences and workshops to understand the Honors in Action (HiA) process, learn how to conduct academic research, and perform professional interviews. We created a sixteen-page informational booklet which we shared with the Carolinas Region and on our campus. We grew as scholar-servant-leaders by critically analyzing complex research, educating others, and understanding the important connection between natural and engineered remedies. Over a century after Thomas Edison's proclamation, we discovered that nutrition is a major factor in disease treatment and will perhaps someday replace drugs.

2. What theme in the current Honors Program Guide did your chapter focus on?

Theme 6: Natural & Engineered

3. Why and by what process did you choose this theme?

Chapter officers discussed each theme in the Honors Program Guide after returning from the International Honors Institute in Chicago. This brainstorming process resulted in the decision to focus on Theme 6: Natural and Engineered. We debated and decided on the topic of cultured or "in vitro" meat, which is meat grown in cell cultures instead of inside animals. Our research indicated cultured meat is a potentially healthier option than regular meat, but we realized it was not a viable project since cultured meat is not commercially available. Our subsequent participation in the Carolinas Region Honors Institute HiA lightning round exercise confirmed we would be unable to complete a project with this topic.

We had to convene once more to determine a new topic. We decided to keep our current theme and concentrate on food and nutrition. At our next meeting, a committee member discussed Gerson Immuno-Nutrition Therapy (GINT) research which intrigued us enough to explore the topic further. This therapy involves eating and juicing specific foods to boost the immune system enough to fight off cancer cells. Our chapter agreed to examine natural cancer treatments and the importance of nutrition therapy versus engineered treatments such as chemotherapy.

4. List the 8 academic/expert sources that were most enlightening regarding multiple perspectives of the Honors Study Topic theme you selected. Briefly explain why these were the most important sources and what you learned from each of them as you researched your theme.

Cassileth, Barrie. "Gerson regimen." *Oncology*, Feb. 2010, pg. 201. Health & Wellness Resource Center. <http://link.galegroup.com>.

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The Gerson Therapy is based on the theory that cancer is caused by alteration of cell metabolism by toxic environmental substances and processed food. The Gerson Institute believes through a strict nutritional diet a person can correct their electrolyte imbalance, repair tissue, and detoxify the liver. The Gerson therapy intrigued us and we wanted to determine if a local facility practiced it.

Dong, Jin Li. MD, OB/GYN, DC, Specialist in Medicine and Alternative Health, The Natural Healing Center of Myrtle Beach. Personal Interview. October 9, 2017.

Our interview with Dr. Jin Li Dong confirmed the importance of nutrition when diagnosed with cancer. A strict organic detoxification, like GINT, is not recommended as a cancer treatment on its own. From this interview, we learned about integrative treatments and therapies she offers to her patients that are recognized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and National Cancer Institute (NCI).

O'Shea, Tim. "To the Cancer Patient: Natural Cures Vs. Traditional, Parts I & II." *Positive Health*, nos. 221 - 222, April - May 2015. <http://search.ebscohost.com>.

The American Cancer Society is constantly disparaged for failing to discover a cure for cancer despite the funds made available for research. These articles discuss the ineffectiveness of chemotherapy, mammography, and surgery to treat cancer. They also highlight the importance of early detection, the side effects of engineered cancer treatments, and processed foods that work against us. These articles led us to explore natural therapies.

Prychitko, Thomas, et al. "Cancer-Fighting Foods." *The Gale Encyclopedia of Cancer: A Guide to Cancer and Its Treatments*, edited by Kristin Fust, 4th ed., vol. 1, Gale, 2015, pp. 357-363. <http://link.galegroup.com>.

This article provided a list of foods created by the American Institute of Cancer Research thought to fight cancer, target specific cancers, and lower the risk of disease development. The information provided here helped us create a booklet for our action component.

Skinner, Patricia, and Teresa G. Odle. "Gerson Therapy." *The Gale Encyclopedia of Alternative Medicine*, edited by Laurie J. Fundukian, 4th ed., vol. 2, Gale, 2014, pp. 993-995. Health & Wellness Resource Center. <http://link.galegroup.com>.

This provided a further description of Gerson Therapy as well as benefits, preparation, precautions, side effects, training and certification, research, and general acceptance. Our team learned although some strongly support this diet, the FDA has not approved this therapy as a cancer treatment. The NCI mentioned risks in the diet which led to the death of three patients.

Trafton, Anne. "How cancer cells fuel their growth." *MIT News*, Mar. 2016. <http://news.mit.edu>.

In this article, MIT biologists discovered the important variable to cancer growth is amino acids. The human body produces most of the essential amino acids, but others must be supplied by the food we eat, and any lack of these amino acids results in deprivation of the body's protein. Though we consume the healthy foods we need, these same foods may feed cancer cells. This article helped us understand how cancer spreads.

Weihofen, DL. "Fighting Cancer with Food and Nutrition." *Journal of Gynecologic Oncology Nursing*, vol. 20, no. 1, Spring 2010, pp. 22-35. <http://search.ebscohost.com>.

We learned in this scholarly article what we eat influences the development of cancer, and some foods help with DNA repair, cell growth, and promote programmed cell death. We conducted additional research into the nutritional properties of food based on this article.

Weitzman, Sheila. "Alternative Nutritional Cancer Therapies." Wiley Online Library, International Journal of Cancer: Supplement 11, 69–72, 1998. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com>.

This article states the Gerson Therapy, by itself, does not cure cancer, but it may supplement conventional cancer treatment, allowing for greater well-being and quality of life. The article provided a global perspective on the Gerson Therapy.

5. What conclusions did your chapter reach based on your research and how did these conclusions guide you to select the action part of your project?

The Gerson Therapy is a natural treatment that stimulates the body's ability to heal itself through an organic plant-based diet, raw juices, coffee enemas and natural supplements. The therapy was developed by Dr. Max Gerson in the 1930s as a treatment for his migraines, but eventually became a treatment for diseases such as skin tuberculosis, diabetes, and cancer. The Gerson Institute has licensed clinics in Mexico, Spain, Hungary, and India. The United Kingdom Cancer Research Center does not recommend this treatment. Also, the FDA does not recognize the Gerson Therapy as a cancer treatment and prohibits advertising it as such. Though GINT cannot be marketed as treatment, there are three facilities in the United States that provide components of the therapy: The Natural Healing Center of Myrtle Beach in South Carolina, the Aloha Wellness Center in Hawaii, and Conner's Alternative Cancer Clinic in Minnesota.

Local statistics revealed approximately 27,000 people are diagnosed with cancer every year in South Carolina, and about 10,000 of those diagnosed die. The mortality rate in Horry and Georgetown counties between 2009 and 2013 was 812, which is approximately 162 people a year. The Natural Healing Center of Myrtle Beach is the only local facility offering a natural/alternative and nutritional way to fight and prevent cancer. Dr. Dong explained fresh organic fruit and vegetable juicing contains high amounts of enzymes, vitamins, and minerals which are significant in the detoxification process, and have many anti-cancer and anti-inflammatory properties. We also learned the center offers a coffee enema detoxification which increases the production of glutathione by 600% to 700%. Glutathione is known as the "master antioxidant" which recharges all other antioxidants to reduce inflammation.

We learned from our interview with gastroenterologist Dr. Vukov that many cancer patients undergoing engineered treatments suffer from gastrointestinal problems. Approximately 80% of adults diagnosed with cancer are malnourished and almost half of them already have some form of a nutritional deficit. Nutrition therapy is important because it restores their digestive health and prevents malnutrition during treatment. We realized eating nutritious foods plays a more important role in someone's health than just maintaining a person's weight. This research led us to promote awareness of the importance of nutrition in cancer treatment.

Our research coordinator, who is a culinary student, was so inspired by our research he decided to pursue a nutrition degree. When he researched the South Carolina Technical College System, he did not find any degree programs in nutrition. Additionally, he found only three four-year colleges in the state that offer a Bachelor of Science degree in Food and Nutrition. From this, he

decided to explore how to bring nutrition curriculum to Horry-Georgetown Technical College (HGTC).

6. Summarize your objectives for this Honors in Action project and the process by which the chapter set these objectives.

Our research taught us good nutrition is important for cancer patients, and there are no nutrition programs in South Carolina's two-year colleges. We deliberated and decided on the following objectives:

- Identify global perspectives of natural cancer treatments and therapies
- Investigate other natural and alternative therapies since the FDA prohibits marketing of the Gerson Therapy
- Explore benefits and detriments to conventional cancer treatment and alternative therapies
- Disseminate information about nutrition's impact on traditional and alternative cancer treatments
- Discuss the possibility of adding an associate's degree program in nutrition with HGTC administrators

7. With whom did you collaborate for this Honors in Action project?

We collaborated with:

- HGTC Research Librarian
- HGTC Career Resource Center Coordinator
- HGTC Print Shop Manager
- HGTC English Professors
- Jin Li Dong, MD, DC, OB/GYN. Specialist of Medicine and Alternative Health at The Natural Healing Center of Myrtle Beach
- Sara Adams, MD. Oncology, Medical Oncology, and Hematology Specialist at Tideland's Waccamaw Oncology
- Gary A. Vukov, MD. Gastroenterologist of Strand GI Associates

8. Describe the leadership of chapter members that contributed to the planning, preparations, and implementation of this Honors in Action project. The exercise of leadership may come from groups/committees, officers, and non-officers. Leadership roles are not necessarily those that come with "titles".

Our HiA chairperson was in charge of managing the project. He set meeting dates, coordinated committee activities, and delegated tasks. When our initial research did not lead us to a project, the HiA committee had to determine a new direction. We lost several committee members in the process and we struggled to find additional members who were interested in the new topic. Our new research coordinator ensured research was diverse by putting it in Trello, an online organizational tool which allowed committee members to share their research findings with each other. Interview committee members developed interview questions to learn more about what alternative treatments are available locally. Our graphic designer created a sixteen-page booklet to share our findings. He did not have access to a publishing program so he used Microsoft Word to

create it. He spent eight hours formatting the booklet so it would print correctly. He worked with HGTC's print shop to determine paper type (glossy or matte) and weight (20lb or cardstock).

9. Describe leadership education and training activities taken to specifically help chapter members be more effective leaders for *this* Honors in Action project.

Chapter members participated in a variety of leadership development exercises throughout the year, beginning with Honors Institute in Chicago, where we attended the following HiA workshops: Beyond the Basics: Honors in Action Research, Beyond the Basics: Honors in Action Exercise of Leadership and Leadership Development. These emphasized the importance of academic research and clarified the planning process, including the difference between leadership roles and training. We met with HGTC's Research Librarian who conducted a workshop teaching us how to perform scholarly research through our college databases. He also created an electronic library guide specific to our project. We attended the Carolinas Region Honors Institute where we participated in an HiA lightning round workshop which served as the catalyst for us to change the focus of our project. Because we did not know how to conduct professional interviews, we asked our career resource center for assistance. The HGTC Career Resource Center Coordinator taught us how to prepare, practice, and perform professional interviews. This training was valuable when we contacted local health professionals. She reviewed our draft interview questions and helped us improve them. We attended the Carolinas Region Leadership Conference where we participated in a "Be An Honors in Action Judge" workshop. We learned how to score projects using the rubric by reading and judging past projects. This exercise helped us understand how to write our Hallmark entry. At this conference, we also participated in a mock chapter exercise where we chose a topic, researched, planned the action component, and wrote the award entry for judging. Feedback from the judges gave us insight into the importance of providing specific research conclusions, detailed descriptions of the process, and correct grammar usage.

10. Describe the service or "action" components of this Honors in Action project that were inspired by and directly connected to your Honors Study Topic research. (Action can also include promoting awareness and advocacy.)

We found that local oncologists who recommend conventional cancer treatments simply suggest working with a dietician. Our research indicated nutrition can significantly improve health in cancer patients, so we attempted to bridge the gap between conventional and alternative therapies. To fill this void, we created a sixteen-page booklet containing information on the importance of nutrition in cancer treatment and therapy. We included cancer diagnosis and mortality rate statistics in North and South Carolina which were provided by the American Cancer Society. We also included statistical data on the relationship between obesity and cancer, conventional cancer treatments, and natural/alternative cancer treatments. We listed pros and cons of both types of treatments. Additionally, we created a list of cancer fighting foods that help a person boost their immune system and target specific cancers. We distributed and explained the contents of our booklet to attendees at the Carolinas Region Leadership Conference and shared it with culinary arts and health science students.

11. What were the quantitative and qualitative outcomes of your project, including the lessons learned by your chapter members and others?

Committee members identified seven local medical professionals to interview and divided the list among interview committee members, who contacted five doctors. Two agreed to answer our

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questions. Unfortunately, a committee member did not complete his two assigned interviews. We should have followed up sooner to assign another interview committee member to contact them.

We learned how to conduct scholarly research and analysis using peer-reviewed databases we did not know were available to students. Research into the Gerson Therapy proved difficult as there were limited supportive academic sources, so we expanded our search to the relationship between nutrition and cancer. We improved our communication skills by learning how to interview professionals. One of our committee members is a culinary student, where the focus is preparation and presentation. This project changed his perspective on food. He now believes food to be powerful fuel that restores the body's homeostasis. We grew as scholar-servant-leaders as we educated ourselves and others on the important role nutrition plays when undergoing engineered therapies and the healing properties of what the environment naturally gives us. Effectively treating cancer is not all natural or all engineered, but a balance between the two.

Our graphic designer created thirty booklets to share our findings with the region and our college. During the Carolinas Region Leadership Conference, two action committee members distributed half of the booklets to chapters in attendance and discussed the contents with approximately 150 students, advisors, and alumni. We distributed five booklets to students enrolled in HGTC's culinary arts and health sciences programs and strategically placed the remaining ten booklets in high traffic areas at HGTC's International Culinary Institute. Time constraints due to changing topics prevented us from formally sharing our research with our college and community, and we plan to hold an event in the Spring.

12. What is left undone or what opportunities remain for the future?

Committee members will share our research with health science students by holding a forum emphasizing the importance of nutrition in cancer treatment. We will contact administrators to explore implementing a dietary/nutrition program at HGTC. Because we did not understand the complex and difficult process of adding a new degree program, we are continuing to gather information to present to our Curriculum Review Committee in the Spring semester.