We find the topic extremely important because most lay people would ascribe cancer to psychological stress, despite the fact that no sound epidemiological study has confirmed this hypothesis. The search for causes of cancer would benefit from putting aside any fascination with stress and other putative direct association between the mind and physiology and pursuing associations with more definable and quantifiable factors such as measurable exposures as we know from lifestyle factors, social factors, or even climate conditions that could be directly investigated. To our knowledge, no study has shown that any psychological factor causes cancer and, to date, there is no convincing evidence that the psychological factors by themselves cause mutations or stimulate cells carrying mutations to proliferate. We propose that World War II survivors probably have a higher risk for cancer because of all other reasons mentioned in Keinan-Boker et al., except for psychological stress (1). A direct link between stress and cancer remains unsubstantiated, and Keinan-Boker et al. (1) have produced no data relevant to establishing such a link.

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Dr. Hursting declined to respond.

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