



Novel Integrative Therapies for Cancer Treatment

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Perspective

Cancer is one of the leading causes of mortality and morbidity. In one of the most developed countries, US alone, nearly two million new cancer cases are added each year. Cancer has broad-spectrum symptoms including pain, general fatigue and mental depression. Even though conventional treatment is the primary choice, a whole new lot of traditional medicine and practices are at disposal for improvement in the prognosis and quality of patient life. These adjuvant therapies are grouped under complementary and alternative medicine. It was reported that most of the cancer patients undergoing conventional allopathic treatment also include conventional medicine and practices for the treatment and alleviation of symptoms. All the treatment regimens taken together are called as integrative therapies. Integrative therapeutic knowledge and practice support recovery, development of efficient treatment strategies and increase in the chances of recovery.

The patient demand for such complementary and integrative therapies is growing primarily for reduction of cancer pain along with pharmaceutical and interventional therapies. Physical therapies were found to be beneficial in the motility and pain management and in fact among cancer survivors' physical activity was found to decrease the intensity of pain. Massage, acupuncture, acupressure and other alternate treatment methods were found to be beneficial for treatment of anxiety, stress, depression and other mental disturbances. Additionally other mind body therapies such as yoga, tai chi, virtual reality and cognitive behavioral therapy were also found to be effective for alleviation of pain. However, clinical trials are being recommended to estimate the efficiency of such integrative therapies while considering pain severity, patient preferences and professional preferences [1].

Pain is generally associated with tissue damage. However, the cancer related pain can have several dimensions including emotional, cognitive and behavioral ramifications. Such pain could lead to psychological complications. The psychological effects can lead to negative impact on the social relationships and altered behavioral aspects [2].

Complementary and alternative medicine coming under integrative therapy is heterogeneous in nature widely distributed across regions. Therefore, there is no one standard integrative medicine pharmacy. In a separate study it was found that majority of the patients expressed high satisfaction for overall all treatment service while they were satisfied with customized treatment plans. The primary goal of the complementary medication is slowing down the progression of tumor growth and simultaneously reducing the side effects of cancer treatments. The study has emphasized that long term treatment goals need to be taken into consideration while practicing the complementary and alternative medicine based integrative therapies [3].

There needs to be a greater coordination between the conventional health practice and the complementary or integrative therapies for patient care in the oncology treatment to reduce the potentially conflicting paradigms for effective and efficient delivery of multidisciplinary patient care. Traditional medicines and spiritual care including bio-psycho spiritual therapies also come under the integrative therapy. Even the art and music therapy are central to the integrative therapy [4]. The main goal of the integrative therapy is the alleviating the toxic effects of the drugs used in the cancer treatment and enhance the immunity and provide relief to the emotional concerns.

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