



Complementary & Rehabilitation Therapy after breast cancer



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From Policy to Best Practice





The Consequences of Breast Cancer

- After the diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer, the patient's experience is not yet finished; it has to be oriented from survival to long-term goals like quality of life.
- Healing wounds of the body and heart is a natural process and it unfolds spontaneously, but there are things we can do to improve and support it.



The Consequences of Breast Cancer

- **Physical:** consequences of the disease as well as of invasive treatment
- **Psychosocial:** stress, trauma, family
- **Spiritual:** change in personal values and perceived meaning of life



The Physical Consequences after oncological therapy:

- Neuropathy
- Lymphedema
- Restriction of movement

Short Term

Difficulty with Swallowing
Tiredness
Muscle Pain
Sore Skin
Hair Loss
Diarrhoea
Nausea
Loss of Appetite
Joint Pain
Breathlessness
Sexual/Fertility Side Effects

Long Term

Second Cancer
Infertility Males & Females
Lymphoedema
Darker Skin
Breast Tissue Shrinkage
Menopause
Hardening of Skin



Neuropathy:

- damage to the small nerves most often in the hands and feet.
- can result from chemotherapy, which is a systemic treatment, meaning it can affect small nerves throughout the entire body.
- trouble walking, typing, opening jars, or performing other tasks throughout the day.
- Causes numbness, burning, tingling, or pain and also weaken the muscles and lead to falls, putting you at risk for further injury.



Lymphedema:

- swollen arm after a mastectomy on the same side of the body as the surgery. Having lymph nodes removed may increase the risk for lymphedema.
- lymphedema can feel tight and painful, the affected arm will feel heavier and more cumbersome to use.
- Lymphedema should be prevented, lest it becomes a lifelong condition.



Lymphedema:



A



B



Restriction of movement and strength:

- scar tissue in the chest and arm areas is thick and not as flexible as normal tissue, so a patient's range of arm motion may decrease.
- soreness or tenderness, so patients may be inclined to hold their arms close to their bodies and avoid moving them.
- restricting movement makes the affected tissues stiffer and weaker, which makes it harder for patients to use their arms later on. It's better for patients to move their arms so their muscles remain strong and their skin stays flexible.



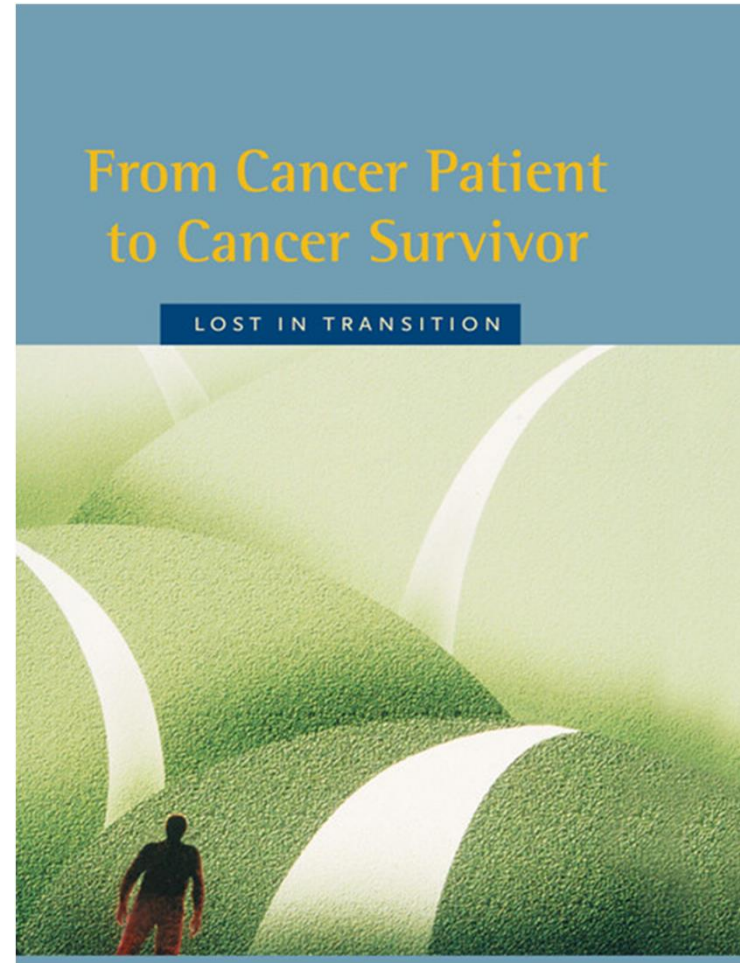
Psychosocial consequences:

- stress and trauma have consequences on human behavior and relationships. Patients are faced with family changes, relationship bonds may be severed, pain and imminent death result in profound personal changes.



Spiritual consequences:

- recovering patients struggle to find new meaning of life, loss and death, that would fit the imminent crisis.





WHAT IS REHABILITATION?

- **Oncology rehabilitation** includes a wide range of therapies designed to help you build strength and endurance, regain independence, reduce stress and maintain the energy to participate in daily activities that are important to you.
- It is part of the traditional medicine, but has some room for complementary techniques.



Physical therapy:

- physical therapists can design an individualized exercise program that combines range-of-motion training with light resistance exercises. These therapeutic exercises aim to reduce fatigue and improve physical function, safety and well-being.



- Physical and occupational therapists can help patients regain their range of motion through strengthening exercises and other methods.





Speech and language

- Therapists address problems with dry mouth, difficulty swallowing, loss of voice and cognitive changes that often result from cancer treatment.



Manual therapy:

- massage helps reduce cancer-related pain and improve the quality of life during cancer treatment. It ranges from traditional massage to techniques that are part of complementary medicine, like Aromatherapy, Acupressure or acupuncture, Reflexology and Chiropractic.



Psychosocial help:

- is designed to address the psychological changes (stress, trauma, change) and social changes (family and work issues)
- Topics may include sexuality concerns, incontinence, weight management, movement program, healthy lifestyle coaching, support for fatigue and sleep disturbances, posttraumatic stress disorder etc.



Multidisciplinary and individual Approaches to Rehabilitation

- Rehabilitation requires **an interdisciplinary team** approach because of the variety of potential problems patients may face during the course of illness.
- The patient's **individual** needs determine the team members involved. The healthcare team must develop rehabilitation goals within the limitations of the patient's illness, environment, and social support.



Empowerment

- Patients, family members, and significant others must be **active participants** in the rehabilitation process. They assist in goal setting. Interdisciplinary rehabilitation is the collaborative effort of professional members of the team working with the patient and of an accompanying support network. The rehabilitation team must provide services to patients throughout the course of illness, during all stages.



WHAT IS CAM

- Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) is the term for medical products and practices that are not part of standard medical care.





Standard medical care

É is medicine that is practiced by health professionals who hold an M.D. degree and by other health professionals, such as physical therapists, physician assistants, psychologists, and registered nurses, radiologists etc.





“ Standard medicine may also be called biomedicine or allopathic, Western, mainstream, orthodox, or regular medicine. Some standard medical care practitioners are also practitioners of CAM.





Alternative medicine

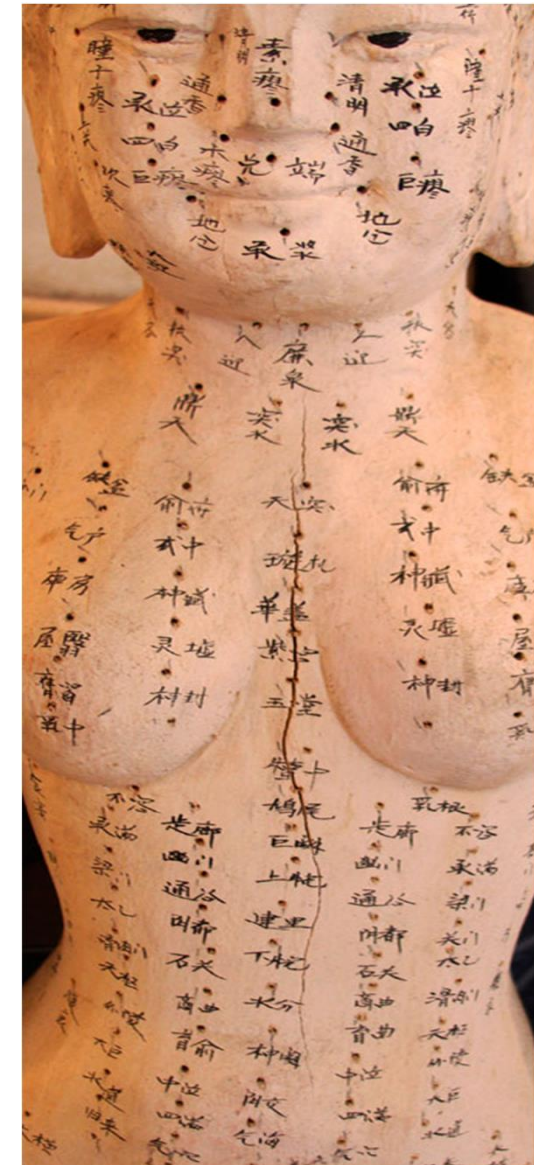
- is treatments that are used instead of standard medical treatments. One example is using a special diet to treat cancer instead of anticancer drugs that are prescribed by an oncologist.





Complementary medicine

- is treatments that are used along with standard medical treatments but are not considered to be standard treatments. One example is using acupuncture to help lessen some side effects of cancer treatment.
- Complementary and alternative medicine includes practices such as massage, acupuncture, tai chi, and drinking green tea.





- **CAM treatments do not cure cancer, but can help your body and psyche recover from the stress and restore balance that has been shaken by the disease and the treatment combined.**



Integrative medicine

- is a total approach to medical care that combines standard medicine with the CAM practices that have been shown to be safe and effective. They treat the patient's mind, body, and spirit.

Source: National Cancer Institute, USA

NCI provides evidence-based PDQ information for many CAM therapies in versions for both the patient and health professional.

Complementary therapies

- Naturopathic medicine
- Nutritional therapy
- Physical rehabilitation
- Mind-body medicine
- Spiritual support

Conventional therapies

- Surgery
- Chemotherapy
- Immunotherapy
- Radiation
- Stem cell transplant



THE DIVERSITY OF CAM METHODS

1. Alternative medical systems
2. Mind-body techniques
3. Biologically based therapies
4. Exercise therapies
5. Bioenergetic therapies



Acupressure
Acupuncture
Acustimulation
Art therapy
Astragalus
Ayurveda
Beta-carotene
Black cohosh
Calcium
Coenzyme Q10
Coriolus mushroom
Echinacea
European mistletoe
Fish oil
Flaxseed
Folic acid
Ginger
Ginkgo
Ginseng, Panax
Green tea
Guided imagery
Hydrazine sulfate
Hypnotherapy
Lactobacillus
Macrobiotic diet
Maitake mushroom
Marijuana
Massage
Meditation
Melatonin
Milk thistle
Music therapy

Niacin
Niacinamide
Pet therapy
Prayer and distant healing
Psychotherapy
Qi gong
Quercetin
Reiki therapy
Reishi mushroom
Relaxation therapy
Resveratrol
Selenium
Shark cartilage
Shiitake mushroom
Soy
St. John's wort
Tai chi
Therapeutic touch
Traditional Chinese medicine
Turmeric
Vitamin A
Vitamin B6
Vitamin B12
Vitamin C
Vitamin D
Vitamin E
Vitamin K
Yoga
Zinc



Natural Does Not Necessarily Mean Safe

“ CAM therapies include a wide variety of botanicals and nutritional products, such as dietary supplements, herbal supplements, and vitamins. Many of these "natural" products are considered to be safe because they are present in, or produced by, nature. However, that is not true in all cases.



CAM products and safety

“ some may affect how well other medicines work in your body. For example, the herb St. John's Wort, which some people use for depression, may cause certain anticancer drugs not to work as well as they should.





Vitamins and safety

“ Vitamins can also have unwanted effects in your body. For example, some studies show that high doses of vitamins, even vitamin C, may affect how chemotherapy and radiation work. Too much of any vitamin is not safe, even in a healthy person.

Supplements

“ Supplements do not have to be approved by the federal government before being sold to the public. Also, a prescription is not needed to buy them.





Why are standard cancer treatments safer than CAM

Standard cancer treatments have generally been studied for safety and effectiveness through an intense scientific process that includes clinical trials with large numbers of patients.



Are CAM Approaches Safe?

Some CAM therapies have undergone careful evaluation and have been found to be safe and effective. However there are others that have been found to be ineffective or possibly harmful. CAM therapies need to be evaluated with the same long and careful research process used to evaluate standard treatments.



You should consult your doctor before using CAM

- as some of them interfere with the metabolism of prescribed drugs or alter the way the body reacts to medicines, and can be harmful if taken during chemotherapy for example. The same is true for extreme diets that are sometimes suggested by natural healers, and can weaken the body's immune responses.



WHY DO PATIENTS USE CAM, EVEN THOUGH IT IS NOT PROVEN SCIENTIFICALLY AND WE HAVE TO PAY FOR IT?

- From 9% to 79% patients use CAM, 80% do not disclose it to their doctors
- Because it supplies what is lacking in conventional medicine
- Because some patients do not trust modern medicine – it is invasive!
- Because it feels good to have a choice!
- Doctors think that they know what is best for the patients, and do not leave choices to the patients



THE REASONS WHY CANCER PATIENTS USE CAM

People with cancer may use CAM to:

- Help them cope with side effects of cancer treatments, such as nausea and pain
- Comfort themselves and ease their worries
- Feel that they are doing something more to help with their own care
- Try to treat or cure their cancer



PATIENT'S BEST ADVICE FOR THE USE OF CAM: "Primum nil nocere!"

1. Only complementary use is advisable!
2. Talk about it with your doctor!
3. Ask for the healer's qualifications and successes (failures?). If he claims his method can cure everything with no side effects, be suspicious!
4. Ask the healer about his opinion on medical treatment
5. Get reliable information about the method you are going to use!
6. In case of strange demands from the healer, be suspicious!
7. Ask in advance for the price and what it encompasses!
8. In case of symptoms getting worse, immediately consult your doctor!



WHAT QUESTIONS SHOULD I ASK MY DOCTOR ABOUT CAM?

What types of CAM might:

- Help me cope, reduce my stress, and feel better?
- Help me feel less tired?
- Help me deal with cancer symptoms, such as pain, or side effect of treatment like nausea?

If I decide to try a CAM therapy:

- Will it interfere with my treatment or medicines?
- Can you help me understand these articles I found about CAM?
- Can you suggest a CAM practitioner for me to talk to?
- Will you work with my CAM practitioner?



WHAT GENERAL QUESTIONS SHOULD I ASK THE CAM PRACTITIONER?

- What types of CAM do you practice?
- What are your training and qualifications?
- Do you see other patients with my type of cancer?
- Will you work with my doctor? How can this help me?
- Do you know of studies that prove it helps?
- What are the risks and side effects?
- Will this interfere with my cancer treatment?
- How long will it take and what will it cost?
- Are there any reasons why I should not use it?
- Do you have information that I can read about it?



QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- Do I feel comfortable with this person?
- Do I like how the office looks and feels?
- Do I like the staff?
- Does this person support standard cancer treatment?
- How far am I willing to travel for treatment?
- Is it easy to get an appointment?
- Are the hours good for me?
- Will insurance cover the cost of CAM treatment?



ANY QUESTIONS?





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KEEPS THE DOCTOR AWAY!**

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