Integrative Oncology: A Local Perspective

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Objectives

- Understand our patients’ preferences regarding Integrative Oncology
- Define allopathic physicians’ concerns and support of integrating complementary therapies with traditional cancer treatment
- Identify patient resources in our community for evidence-based integrative oncology
- Explore the potential opportunities for increased collaboration between allopathic and naturopathic providers
Integrative Oncology (IO)

* Integrating complementary therapies with standard of care/conventional oncology treatment.

* These integrative or complementary therapies are also therapies that have research supporting use as a treatment modality and this is in contrast to the term “CAM” Complementary and Alternative Medicine.

NCCIH (formerly NCCAM) Stats

* 65% of adults diagnosed with CA reported use of CAM therapies (2007)
* 43.3% reported CAM use within the last year
* 77% prevent Illness or promote wellness
  73% reduce pain or treat painful condition
  59% treat a specific condition
* 43-80% of BrCA patients report use
General IO Statistics

- Significantly Improve anxiety
- Significantly Improve depression
- Significantly Improve fatigue
- Significantly improves QoL

QUALITY OF LIFE (QoL) IN OVARIAN CANCER (OV CA) PATIENTS RECEIVING INTEGRATIVE ONCOLOGY (IO) THERAPIES AT BASTYR INTEGRATIVE ONCOLOGY RESEARCH CENTER (BIORC)

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Figure 4

QoL in OV CA patients using IO therapies

Fig. 4. An increase in the QoL score of 1.3 is noted from Baseline to Year 1 scores on the "In general how is your health" assessment question.
Naturopathic Doctors in the Community Setting

* Naturopathic Doctors do NOT TREAT CANCER
* Offer Adjunctive and Supportive Care
  * This may include recommending therapies to help with side effects during CA treatment
  * Lifestyle changes to prevent future CA occurrence and increase QoL parameters
  * Supportive therapies after CA treatment has completed
  * Wide variety of recommended treatments
Identifying Patient Resources in our Community for IO

- We do not know the exact number of providers in the community that are using IO therapies or providing IO care and what types of IO care however:
  - # of Naturopathic Doctors in Bellingham and Surrounding Area according to WANP (16) and the AANP (10 with replication from WANP)
  - Acupuncturists (45 approximate)
  - Massage Therapists (173 approximate and conservative)
  - Mind/Body Practitioners (no specific licensure)
Challenges for providers outside the system

* Outside the EHR – communication can be difficult
* Few to No staff besides the provider
* Communication barriers - language/terminology
* Continuing Education
* Patient/Doctor Bias
Challenges IO Therapies

* Lack of research, Lack of funding
* Lack of research on “popular therapies”
* Lack of communication between providers and patients
* Science Education discrepancies
Collaborating

CAM Decision Making

INITIAL PHASE
Information Gathering Phase

MID PHASE
Reevaluation of treatment strategy
“Are my treatments working”

FINAL PHASE - Return back to the initial information gathering phase.
“Is there anything I can do to prevent my cancer from returning”
Or “is there another treatment regimen that can further treat my cancer”

“Integrative Oncology is something that should be provided, both services and information, for all cancer patients”

-St. Joseph Cancer Center Patient
Integrative Oncology at the St. Joseph Cancer Center

- Yoga
- Massage
- Mediation
- Spiritual Care
- Exercise
- Art Therapy
- Pet Therapy
Patient Survey Responses
n = 126

% by Age

% by Gender

Third Annual Palliative Care Institute Conference
48% of Patients have used one or more Complementary Therapies

- Acupuncture
- Mindy/Body
- Phototherapy
- Vitamins/Herbs/Supplements
- Cannabis
- Hyperthermia
- Oxygen Therapy
Patient Survey Results

* 21% have consulted a Naturopathic Physician
* 73% would consider a consultation
* 83% would prefer this consultation to be held at the Cancer Center
Physician Survey Results
n=52

Estimate # of your patients with cancer who are using CAM

- <10%
- 11-25%
- 26-50%
- 51-75%
- >75%

Third Annual Palliative Care Institute Conference
Do you discuss CAM with your patients?

- Often: 20
- Sometimes: 60
- Never: 10
**Physician Survey Results**

Mind/Body Therapy

- Do not agree with use
- Support with traditional Rx
- Support as alternative to traditional Rx
- No opinion

Supplements/Herbs

- Do not agree with use
- Support with traditional Rx
- Support as alternative to traditional Rx
- No opinion
Would you refer your patient to a Naturopathic Provider?

- Would Refer
- Would Consider Referring
- Would not Refer

To Naturopath
To Naturopath at Cancer Center
Survey Conclusions

- Cancer patients are interested in CAM
- Wide variety of CAM use by our patients
- Patients want collaboration between Naturopathic Providers and Other Providers as a Cancer Team
- Physicians underestimate CAM use by their cancer patients but are willing to discuss
- Physicians are more comfortable with a CAM approach that uses evidence-based care and is integrated with traditional therapies
Opportunities for increased collaboration

* Identify Patient Goals
* Awareness of CAM decision making as early information is important for decision making.
* Communication with other providers and patients
* Better navigation of community resources
* Better communication with patients regarding realistic goals and the state of the evidence.
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