

Taiwanese adult cancer patients' reports of using complementary therapies

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BACKGROUND: More information is needed by cancer clinicians regarding cancer patients' use of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). **OBJECTIVE:** In this qualitative study, in-depth interviews were used to obtain the reports of adult cancer patients regarding their use of CAM.

METHODS: Seven cancer patients (4 women, 3 men) who reported using CAM were recruited by snowball sampling. Content analysis was used to examine the interview transcriptions. **RESULTS:** Five themes and multiple categories were identified related to CAM use: (1) facing the challenges of cancer (I can't be defeated, need to cooperate with conventional medical treatment, rebuilding my confidence), (2) handling the physical and psychological distress of CAM use (extra loading due to the therapy, uncertainty and fear about the efficacy of CAM, being understood and supported, feeling guilty about being sick, (3) lifestyle disruption (altering social life, changing family living style), (4) having reasons for seeking other therapies (finding a way to cure the disease, boosting my immunity, improving my overall health status, and prolonging life and searching for peace of mind), and (5) unresolved practical concerns about CAM (finding an easy and effective way to practice CAM, needing CAM to be integrated into mainstream health care, and where to get the related information). **CONCLUSION:** Adult Taiwanese cancer patients who use CAM do experience burdens secondary to CAM use and prefer that oncology specialists be more informed about CAM. **IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE:** Oncology specialists who know where adult cancer patients could obtain helpful information about CAM would help to decrease the burdens that patients who use CAM experience.

Cancer Nurs. 2010 Jul-Aug;33(4):320-6. Lu JH, Tsay SL, Sung SC. Department of Nursing, Chang Gung Institute of Technology, Tao-Yuan, Taiwan.

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