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Usage of complementary / alternative medicine (CAM) and perception towards it among cancer patients admitted in tertiary care hospitals

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Background: Cancer being a deadly disease, cancer victims face great challenges with respect to their routines, roles and relationships. The usage of other means to cure illness is called complementary and alternative medicine or CAM. This study is done to determine the proportion and usage pattern of CAM for cancer treatment and to assess the perception towards CAM among cancer patients.

Methodology: It was a Descriptive cross-sectional study, carried out among cancer patients admitted to tertiary care hospitals attached to a medical college. The interview schedule was prepared which consists of four sections including the socio-demographic details, details about the diagnosis and treatment of cancer among the study participants, details about the usage pattern of Complementary medicine, and the perception of cancer victims towards Complementary medicine for cancer treatment. Data will be entered and analyzed by using the statistical software Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 11.5.

Results: Out of 105 participants majority of cancer patients, 74 (70%) of them were of the age group between 40- 70 years. 65% of the patients had addictions among which 60 (90.9%) were addicts for more than 10 years. The majority of the patients underwent radiotherapy 85 (81.0%), followed by Chemotherapy 72 (68.6%), The number of patients that have used CAM in our study was found to be 12 (11.4%). Many of them chose Ayurveda as their type of CAM 5 (41.7%) followed by home remedies usage 4 (25%). 39 (38.5%) believe that there should be more evidence that CAM works while 38 (33.8%) don't need any evidence about it. 45 (42.9%) feel that CAM treatment does not work in the treatment of cancer while 35 (33.3%) remained neutral in this aspect. 85 (81.0%) are satisfied with present cancer treatment. 78 (74.3%) agreed that Modern medicine is most effective for treatment of cancer.

Conclusion: The usage of CAM in our study was found to be minimal. The majority of the participants are satisfied with modern medicine and most of the patients are satisfied with allopathic treatment.

Keywords: CAM, Cancer, Health systems

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