



CAM Improves Quality of Life With Cancer

Editorial Staff

Several studies have shown the value of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) therapies in helping patients deal with the side effects of chemotherapy for cancer.¹⁻⁷ Some of these side effects may include nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, fatigue or insomnia. Now, a [recent study](#) from Sao Paulo, Brazil, has shown that visualization and acupuncture may be very beneficial in improving the quality of life for adult cancer patients following chemotherapy.⁸

Namie Okino Sawada, RN, PhD, and colleagues divided a group of 75 adult patients with cancer, who were starting chemotherapy, into two groups. The intervention group was to receive weekly relaxation/visualization exercises, along with acupuncture (38 patients). The other group was the control, which did not receive the intervention treatment (37 patients). Patients could select which group they wished to enter. All patients completed a global health/quality-of-life questionnaire.

The relaxation/visualization sessions lasted 15 minutes each, while the acupuncture sessions lasted 20 minutes each and were designed to treat symptoms of nausea and vomiting, loss of appetite and abdominal distension. Some of the selected points included PC6 (*Nei Guan*) for vomiting; E36 to control and balance *qi*; RM12 (*Zhong Wan*) to treat stomach ache, vomiting, indigestion, loss of appetite, pain and abdominal distension; RM17 (*Shan Zhong* or *Tan Zhong*) for anxiety; and F2 (*Xing Jian*) for insomnia. The relaxation/visualization session consisted of guided images of calmness and serenity, allowing the patient to visualize their bodies as healthy and strong.

Researchers found that at the end of the study (approximately six weeks), the participants in the intervention group reported significantly increased global health/quality-of-life scores as well as emotional and social functions. Participants in the intervention group reported a decrease in fatigue, nausea and vomiting, pain, insomnia, loss of appetite, constipation and diarrhea. Participants in the

control group also reported significant improvements in global health/quality-of-life scores. However, they also reported increases in symptoms such as fatigue, nausea and vomiting, pain, insomnia, and diarrhea. They concluded, "Relaxation with visualization and acupuncture influenced the improvement in QoL of the IG participants."

References

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