

JL03. Adding to Your Tool Box: Holistic Modalities

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Significance: Holistic medicine, as defined by the American Holistic Medical Association, “is the art and science of healing that addresses care of the whole person—body, mind, and spirit.” The practice of holistic medicine integrates conventional/traditional medicine and complementary therapies to promote optimal well-being, and prevent and treat disease by addressing underlying factors. Advanced practitioners can offer adjunctive, effective, and evidence-based techniques to treat symptoms associated with cancer and related treatments. A growing body of scientific evidence supports integrative modalities in oncology by numerous health-care providers. Many modalities can be learned and offered to oncology patients to increase their quality of life while undergoing therapies. *Purpose:* The purpose of this research study was to investigate the effects on the parasympathetic nervous system with four holistic modalities offered to oncology patients by certified holistic nurses. The secondary aims were to identify which holistic modalities would be chosen by oncology patients during hospitalization or radiation treatments, examine the changes in physiologic vital sign measurements (blood pressure, pulse, respiration), and correlate patients’ self-reported evaluation of anxiety, nausea, and pain with the modalities received. *Interventions:* Holistic consults were offered to oncology patients in the hospital/radiation therapy department by physicians and nurses. Patients could select any or all of the four modalities. Vital signs and self-evaluation of three potential symptoms (anxiety, nausea, pain) were assessed prior to beginning the modality and at completion. *Evaluation:* After receiving IRB approval, 442 patients participated in this study. Available modalities (healing touch, guided imagery, aroma therapy, massage) were explained, and verbal consent was obtained. Sixty-seven percent chose healing touch first, followed by guided imagery (23%) and hand/foot massage (21%), with aroma therapy being the least selected modality (8%). After receiving any of these interventions, statistically significant drops in physiologic vital sign measurements were observed with each modality (t-test $p < .01$) except aroma therapy ($p = .49$ on diastolic blood pressure). Changes in self-reported improvement in anxiety, nausea, and pain were statistically significant ($p < .01$) except aroma therapy ($p = .08$ for nausea). *Discussion:* Holistic interventions play an increasingly important role in controlling symptoms associated with cancer treatments/hospitalizations. Teaching and incorporating three integrative modalities into clinical practice by advanced practitioners can improve symptomatology, and promote self-care. Advanced practitioners can learn these modalities through qualified CEU courses, as most curriculums do not include integrative modalities.