

cancer answers

Cancer Answers is a series of free public lectures, presented by *Cancer Care Nova Scotia*, on a variety of cancer-related topics. The lectures, delivered by cancer experts, are designed to raise awareness and educate participants about issues related to prevention, screening, early diagnosis, treatment, survivorship and palliative care.

Following each lecture, the presentations are posted on the *Cancer Care Nova Scotia* website.



Cancer Answers:

Complementary and Alternative Therapies An Overview from a Cancer Doctor

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Robert Rutledge, MD, FRCPC

Radiation Oncologist, Nova Scotia Cancer Centre

Associate Professor, Dalhousie University

Overview

- Empower you with the best strategy to face a cancer diagnosis
- Maximize your chance of being cured or living as long and as well as possible
- Increase your sense of well being
- Provide a clear and practical approach to exploring complementary medicine



Take home points

- Find a balance between research + following your intuition
- Tell your doctor what you're doing
- Don't forego proven treatments



Complementary and Alternative Medicine = CAM

- CAM is short for Complementary and Alternative Medicine
- Covers many healing philosophies, approaches and therapies
- These treatment and practices are not taught or used in conventional medicine
- CAM is holistic – it includes physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of care

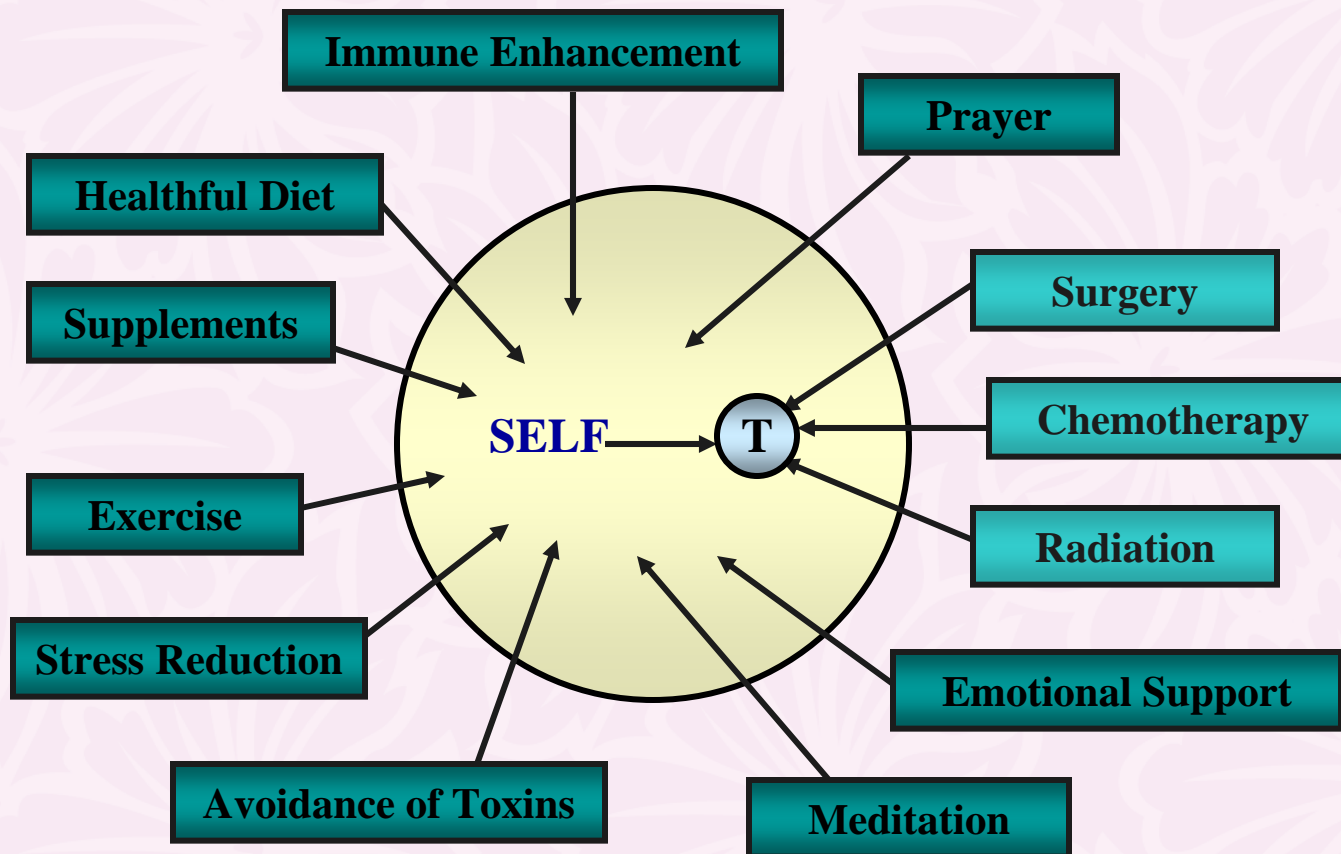
Complementary versus Alternative

- Alternative medicine is used **in place** of standard medical treatments.
- Example: using a special diet instead of what your cancer specialist recommends
- Alternative therapies have not been scientifically proven to work and have sometimes been disproved
- They are sometimes invasive, biologically active, and costly
- Don't forgo proven treatments

Integrated medicine

- Integrative medicine is **a total approach to care** that involves the patient's mind, body, and spirit.
- Integrative medicine combines standard medicine with the CAM practices that have shown the most promise.
- For example, some people learn to use relaxation as a way to reduce stress during radiotherapy.
- I call this 'complete cancer care'

Integrated Healing Model



INDIVIDUALIZE ADVICE

- There is no one best way
- We are all unique
 - Different strategies work best for various personalities
- Use your rational mind and listen to your own inner wisdom
- Strategy will change with time
 - There are different needs at diagnosis, on treatment and in follow up

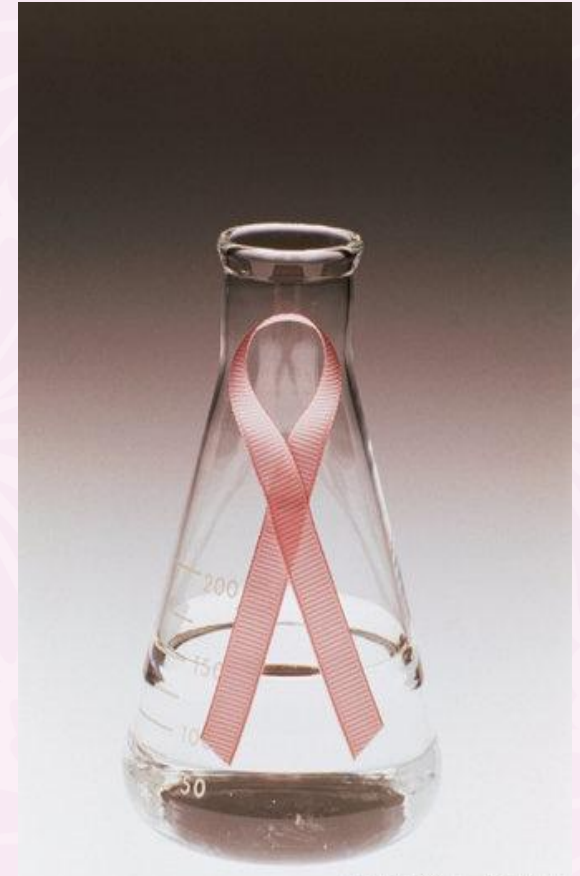
What is Complete Cancer Care?

- Understanding what's happening
- Getting the best from the medical system
- Empowering oneself with healthy lifestyle
 - Exercise, diet, sleep, relaxation techniques
- Adopting a positive attitude
- Integrating complementary Rx



Conventional Medicine

- Focuses on physical treatments
- Scientific method relies on proof
- Documentation of toxicity
- Doctor as therapist / consultant
 - Risks vs. benefits of all options
- Breast cancer has higher cure rates



Medical system: Getting More than Physical Care

- Multiple services are available in medical system
 - Nutrition
 - Psychology
 - Home care nursing
 - Rehabilitation
 - Spiritual care
- Social worker can help coordinate if needed
- Ask the nurse or doctor
- Talk to an expert

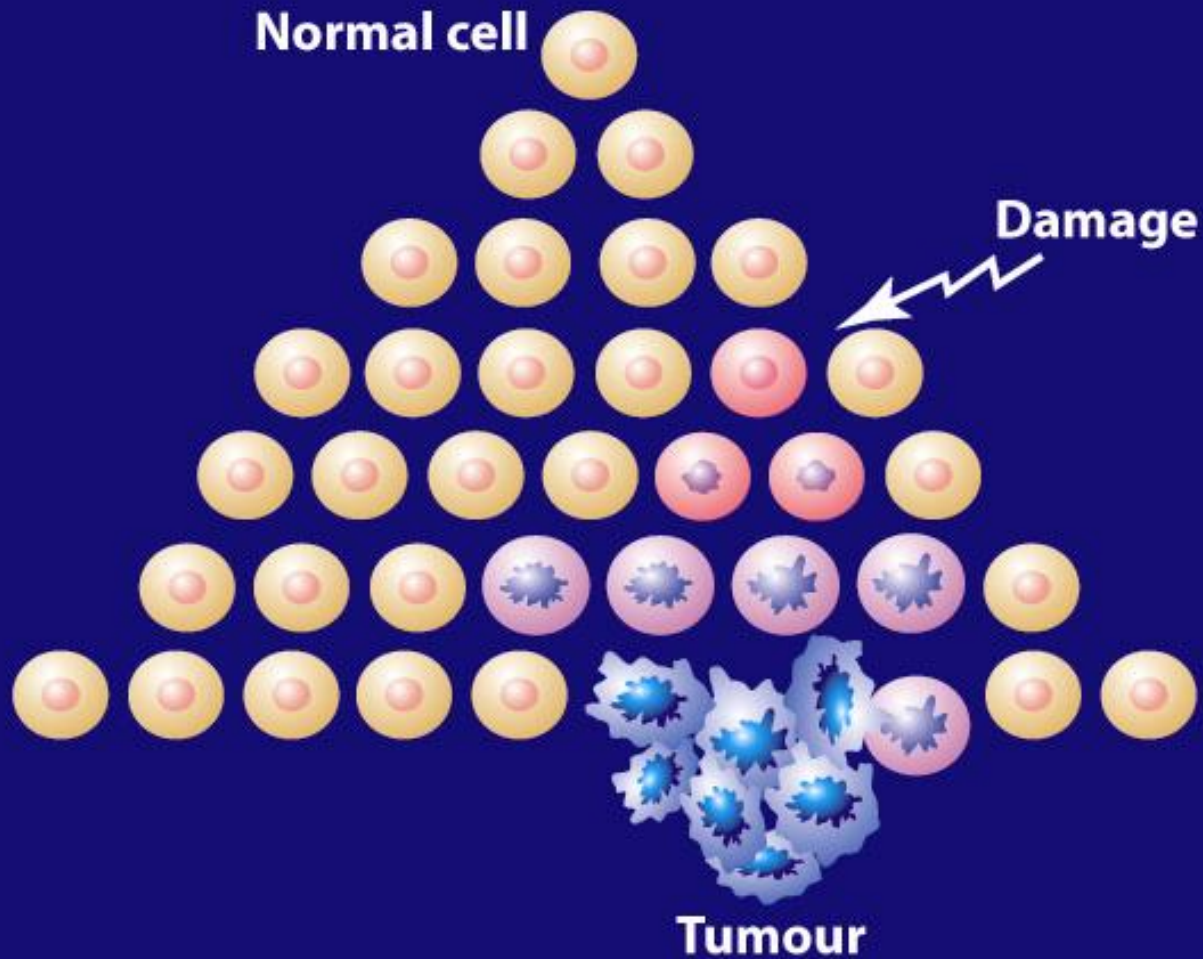


CONVENTIONAL MEDICINE

- Time / financial restraints
- Lacks a fully holistic approach
- Will incorporate proven therapy
- Limited understanding



Understanding cancer: Normal cell transforms into cancer cells



Cancer as a physical problem

- Cancer is caused by mistakes in the genes in normal cells
- These mistakes can be caused by 'oxidants' in our blood
- A healthy diet has anti-oxidants to mop up oxidants and prevent further damage
- Change 'the soup' that the cancer grew in by:
 - healthy lifestyle choices
 - the mind-body connection
- Boost the immune system through stress reduction etc

Intensive lifestyle changes may affect the progression of prostate cancer.

Ornish et al J Urol. 2005 Sep; 174(3):1065-9; discussion 1069-70

- Randomized trial, n=93 men with biopsy-proven low-risk prostate cancer
- All men were on observation – no active Rx
- Experimental arm: stress management, low-fat vegan diet with antioxidants, moderate exercise, and psychosocial group support
- PSA measured at baseline, q3months for 1 year

Intensive lifestyle changes may affect the progression of prostate cancer.

Ornish et al J Urol. 2005 Sep;174(3):1065-9; discussion 1069-70

- Experimental arm - PSA down 4% at one year
- Control - PSA up 6% and 6/43 needed Rx
- Control group followed diet 75% as well as experimental group yet PSA increased
- 2nd experiment : Serum from men inhibited prostate cancer cell growth in test tubes in 70% in experimental group vs 9% in controls
- Greater adherence to program inhibited prostate cancer cells more often

The Importance of Nutrition

- Effective way to improve overall health
- Individualize to what works
 - Different diet during different phases of treatment
- Ask doctor and/or professional nutritionist if persistent problems with:
 - Ongoing unintentional weight loss or loss of muscle
 - Nausea and vomiting
 - Diarrhea / constipation
 - Treatment affecting the GI tract



General Nutrition Advice

- Follow Canada's Food Guide recommendations
www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-alimentindex_e.html
- Choose a variety of food from all food groups daily
- 5-10 servings of fruits and vegetables/day
- Choose lower fat food groups
 - Fat to make up < 20% of caloric intake
- Choose high fiber foods
 - Whole grain breads and cereals
- Drink plenty of healthful fluids
- Maintain healthy weight



Taking Your Vitamins

- Ask your doctor if your on treatment
- Off therapy minimum:
 - Vitamin D 800 IU / day
 - Calcium 1,600 mg / day
- Vitamin D and calcium help to prevent new cancers
- Healthy diet should provide the rest



Beware of extreme diets

- No one food or special diet that has been proven to control cancer
- Your body needs to the full complement of nutrients to heal
- Strict vegetarian diet with milk products – watch your iron intake
- If vegan diet (no animal products) - watch your intake of protein, calcium, zinc and vitamin B12

Greater Survival After Breast Cancer in Physically Active Women With High Vegetable-Fruit Intake Regardless of Obesity

Pierce et al, *J Clin Oncol* 25:2345-2351. 2007

- 1490 women on control arm of dietary study
 - Median age 51, 40% stage 1, 45% stage 2
- Baseline questionnaires of exercise, diet, weight, health measured every 6 months
- Followed for 9 years
 - 135 deaths of which 118 due to Breast cancer

Greater Survival After Breast Cancer in Physically Active Women With High Vegetable-Fruit Intake Regardless of Obesity

Pierce et al, *J Clin Oncol* 25:2345-2351. 2007

- Protective effect on mortality for
- 5 or more servings of fruits and veggies /day
- 30 min moderate walking 6 times / week
- **ESPECIALLY IF THEY DID BOTH**
- Regardless of obesity
- But only 16% of obese women and 30% of others did both healthy habits

Greater Survival After Breast Cancer in Physically Active Women With High Vegetable-Fruit Intake Regardless of Obesity

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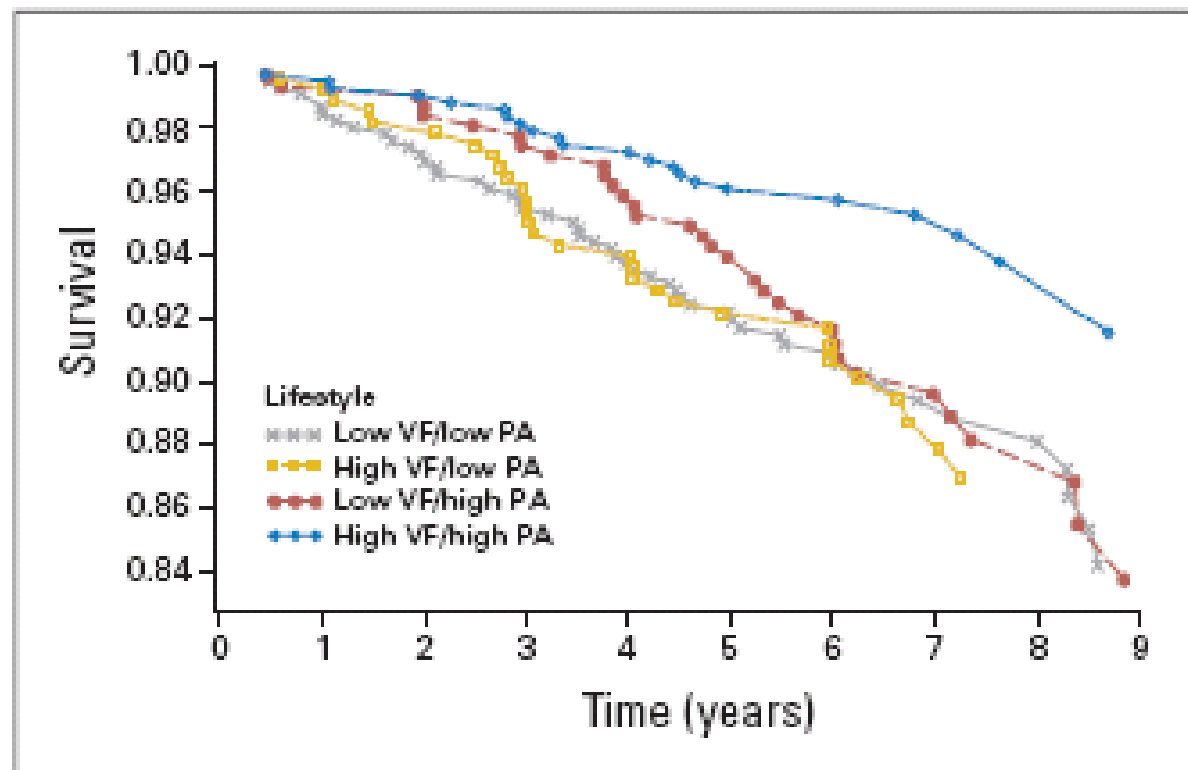


Fig 1. Kaplan-Meier survival after Women's Healthy Eating and Living (WHEL) Study enrollment by four diet and physical activity categories. Low vegetables-fruits (VF), less than 5 servings/d; high VF, ≥ 5 servings/d; low physical activity (PA), less than 540 metabolic equivalent task (MET) -min/wk; high PA, ≥ 540 MET-min/wk. Survival is plotted as a function of number of years enrolled in WHEL Study.

P=.01

The Benefits of Exercise

- Effective way to improve energy, sleep, mood and overall health
- You need to listen to your body to guide yourself
- Individualize to phase of journey
 - Slowly increase activity each week
- After recovery, aim for at least 30 minutes 5+ days/week



Other Healthy Habits

- Maintain a reasonable weight
- Sleep for 7-8 hours in the dark
- Practice a relaxation technique



Practice Relaxation

- Learn to relax
- Practice relaxation techniques (i.e., yoga, meditation, Tai Chi) to calm the mind
- Proven to improve overall health
- Decreases heart disease, mental illness, hypertension, and diabetes



Support Groups

- Gathering of people with a similar issue, usually for 2-4 hours a month
- Can help you with:
 - Getting information
 - Learning ways to cope
 - Practical tips and support
 - A safe place to express your emotions
- Improve quality of life!





Complementary and Alternative Therapies **An Overview from a Cancer Doctor**

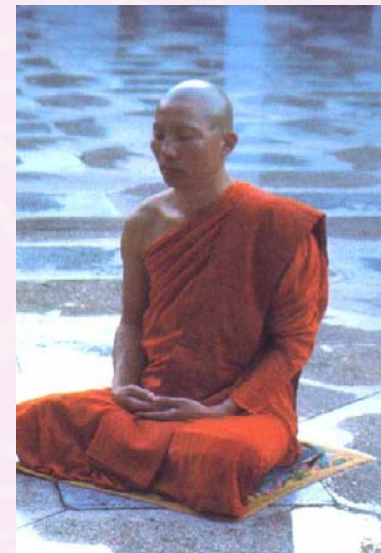
Complementary medicine is used **along with**
standard medical treatments.

CLASSIFICATION OF CAM

- 1) Mind-Body medicine – eg. meditation, yoga
- 2) Biologically-based: herbs, food, vitamins
- 3) Manipulative and Body-based: eg. chiropractic
- 4) Energy Medicine – eg. reiki, therapeutic touch
- 5) Whole Medical Systems – eg. eastern medicine

Mind-Body Medicine

- These are based on the belief that your mind is able to affect your body.
- Meditation: Focused breathing or repetition of words or phrases to quiet the mind



Mind-Body Medicine

- Biofeedback: Using simple machines, the patient learns how to affect certain body functions that are normally out of one's awareness (such as heart rate).

Mind-Body Medicine

- Hypnosis: A state of relaxed and focused attention in which the patient concentrates on a certain feeling, idea, or suggestion to aid in healing;



Mind-Body Medicine

- Yoga: Systems of stretches and poses, with special attention given to breathing;



Mind-Body Medicine

- Imagery: Imagining scenes, pictures, or experiences to help the body heal
- Creative outlets: Such as art, music, or dance.

Mind-Body Medicine

- ***Recommendation*** : Mind-body modalities are recommended as part of a multidisciplinary approach to reduce anxiety, mood disturbance, or chronic pain and improve quality of life.

Biologically Based Practices

- This type of CAM uses things found in nature.
- It includes dietary supplements and herbal products.
- Some examples are Vitamins, Herbs, Foods, special diets
- Tell your physician what you're taking!



A natural product does not mean a safe product

- Dietary supplements such as herbs and vitamins:
- May affect how well other medicines work in your body.
- The herb St. John's wort, which some people with cancer use for depression, may cause certain anticancer drugs not to work as well as they should.
- Herbal supplements can act like drugs in your body and be harmful. Example Kava can cause liver damage.
- Too much of any vitamin is not safe.
- High dose vitamin C may interfere with chemo or Radiation

Manipulative and Body-based Practices

- These are based on working with one or more parts of the body.
- Massage: Manipulation of tissues with hands or special tools – is recommended for anxiety and pain
- Chiropractic care: A type of manipulation of the joints and skeletal system;
- Reflexology: Using pressure points in the hands or feet to affect other parts of the body.

Energy Medicine

- Energy medicine involves the belief that the body has energy fields that can be used for healing and wellness. Therapists use pressure or move the body by placing their hands in or through these fields.

Energy Medicine

- Tai Chi (ty-CHEE): Involves slow, gentle movements with a focus on the breath and concentration;



Energy Medicine

- Reiki (RAY-kee): Balancing energy either from a distance or by placing hands on or near the patient;
- Therapeutic touch :Moving hands over energy fields of the body.

Energy Medicine

- ***Recommendation*** : Therapies based on manipulation of putative bioenergy fields are safe but cannot be encouraged due to limited evidence on efficacy.

Whole Medical Systems

- These are healing systems and beliefs that have evolved over time in different cultures and parts of the world.
- Examples include
- Ayurvedic medicine (eye-yer-VAY-dik): A system from India emphasizing balance among body, mind, and spirit;

Whole Medical Systems

- Chinese medicine: Based on the view that health is a balance in the body of two forces called *yin* and *yang*.

Whole Medical Systems

- Acupuncture (AK-yoo-PUNK-cher) is a common practice in Chinese medicine that involves stimulating specific points on the body to promote health, or to lessen disease symptoms and treatment side effects;
- Acupuncture is recommended as a complementary therapy when pain is poorly controlled or when side effects, such as neuropathy or xerostomia from other modalities, are clinically significant.

Whole Medical Systems

- Homeopathy: Uses very small doses of substances to trigger the body to heal itself;
- Osteopathy: emphasizes the role of the musculoskeletal system in restoring health
- Naturopathic medicine: Uses different methods that help the body naturally heal itself.

NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE

- Emphasis of strengthening body's ability to fight off cancer
- "Cancer" forms as a result of body's inability to heal itself, ie. strengthen immune system to fight cancer
- Consider toxins and lack of needed rest, exercises and diet
- Holistic view - stress, lifestyle, etc
- Use herbs, vitamins, etc

Whole Medical Systems

- ***Recommendation:*** It is recommended that dietary supplements, in particular herbal products, be evaluated for side effects and potential interaction with other drugs. Those that are likely to interact with other drugs, including chemotherapeutic agents, should not be used concurrently with chemotherapy or radiation, or prior to surgery.

PREVALENCE OF CAM

- General population - 46% use CAM at some time
- Cancer patients – 70% will use it every year
- \$27 billion industry annually
- Most common CAM are herbals and megavitamins

ADVANTAGES OF CAM

- Practitioner gives more time
- Attention to emotional/spiritual
- Patient involvement and choice
- Touch
- Hope

Disadvantages of Complementary Medicine

- Can be expensive
- Some practitioners make unproven and false claims
- Some toxicities unknown
 - Librarian can do search on natural medicines database
- Beware of extreme diets

What should you do?

- Do the research, use your rationale mind and balance this with your intuition
- The first question is – does this therapy work?
- What's the quality of the proof?



How to choose a CAM Practitioner

- CAM practitioners are people who have training in the therapies listed above. Choose carefully!
- Contact CAM professional organizations to get names of practitioners who are certified.
- Contact local health and wellness organizations
- Ask about each practitioner's training and experience
- Ask whether the practitioner has a license to practice in the province

What to Ask your CAM Practitioner

- How can this help me?
- How long will I be on this therapy?
- Evidence of benefits of treatment
 - Do you know of studies that prove it helps? Show me.
- Risk and toxicity of treatment:
 - Documented?
 - Does it interact with other medications?
 - Will it interfere with my cancer treatment
- What is the total cost?

WHAT IS THE QUALITY OF EVIDENCE?

- DOES THE TREATMENT WORK?
- Randomized trials are best
- Comparison groups
- Case series
- Phase 1 - experimental
- Case reports
- Other



Buyer beware

- Be careful of products advertised by people or companies that
- Make claims that they have a "cure"
- Do not give specific information about how well their product works
- Make claims only about positive results that have few side effects
- Say they have clinical studies, but provide no proof or copies of the studies.

HOW TO FIND OUT MORE

- **National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM)** <http://nccam.nih.gov>
- MD Anderson Hospital is a world class cancer treatment centre which performs clinical trials on many complementary treatments www.mdanderson.org/CIMER
- Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Centre is another conventional cancer centre www.mskcc.org/mskcc
- Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database provides an overview of all natural medicines www.naturaldatabase.com
- www.quackwatch.org

HOW TO FIND OUT MORE

- Canadian Cancer Society – cancer information service is free.
www.cancer.ca or 1 888 939 3333
- Inspire Health is a Vancouver-based integrative cancer centre and provide monthly CAM updates www.inspirehealth.ca

DOES CAM WORK?

- Improves overall well-being, pain, nausea etc.
- There is always hope

Fighting for life: a qualitative analysis of the process of psychotherapy-assisted self-help in patients with metastatic cancer.

Cunningham et al. Integr Cancer Ther. 2002 Jun; 1(2):146-61

- 22 patients with metastatic cancer enrolled prospectively in a year long weekly support group
- Each assessed qualitatively (written homework, field notes)
- Derived an estimate of “involvement in self-help” – high, medium, low
- 9 were highly involved: daily, often hours of self-help strategies

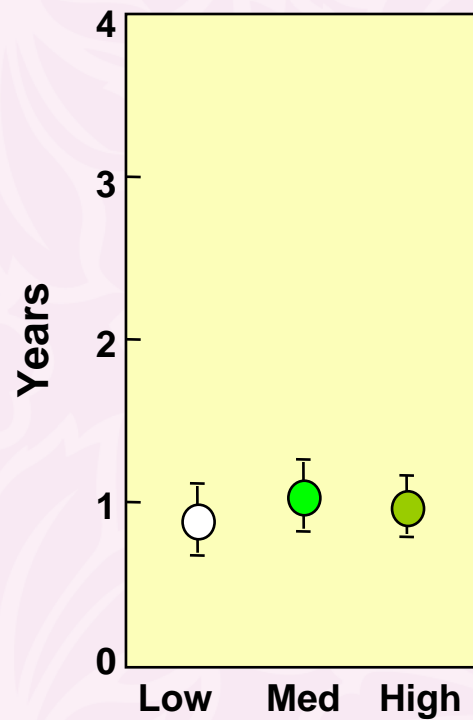
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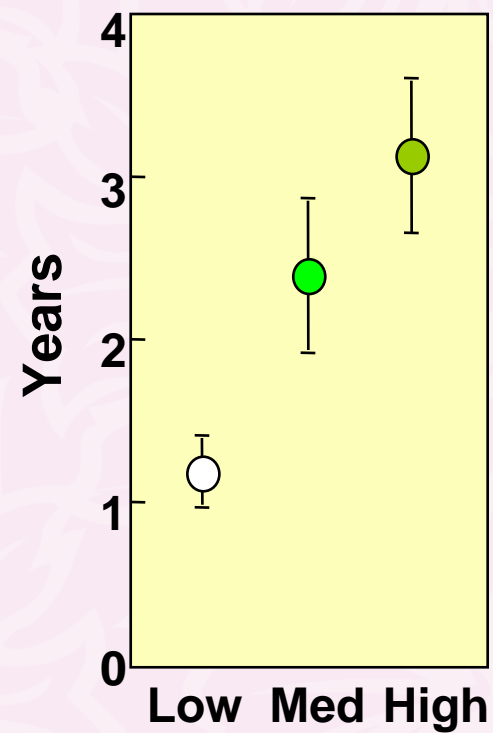
- Of 9 highly involved: all but one lived two years with good quality of life
 - Two living out beyond 10 years
- Of 8 'low involvement': low-self esteem, none had good quality of life, only 1 lived to two years

Self-help Can Improve Survival

Predicted Survival



Observed Survival



Level of Involvement in Self-Help

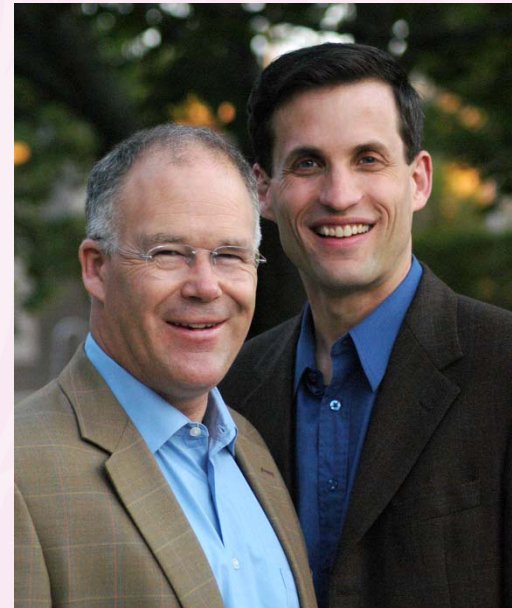
SUMMARY OF CAM

- **Research and listen to your heart**
- **Tell your doctor**
- **Find a peaceful approach**



Skills for Healing Weekend Retreat

- November 28-30, Halifax
- Learn more about complete cancer care
- Coping skills like meditation
- Visit www.robrutledge.ca
- Call Camilla at 425-4848
- Free



Increased telomerase activity and comprehensive lifestyle changes

- Published in The Lancet Sept 16, 2008 by Dr. Dean Ornish
- Telomeres are the protective endings to our chromosomes
- More stress causes shortening of telomeres, which predicts for worse health, disease progression and premature death
- Healthy lifestyle seems to lengthen telomeres
- 30 men with low-risk prostate cancer followed for 3 months
- Lifestyle change – weekend retreat, healthy diet, exercise, stress reduction techniques, and weekly support group
 - Supplements: Tofu/soy, fish oil, vitamin C+E, selenium
- Telomere protection increased over 3 months + men felt better