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A view of postmenopausal women with rheumatoid arthritis to complementary and alternative medicine methods: A pilot study

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Background: Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a chronic, inflammatory, autoimmune, multi-systemic disorder with unknown etiology. RA is the most frequent type of inflammatory arthritis affecting approximately 1% of the world-wide population. Additionally, women are more frequently afflicted with RA than men.

Objective: The aim of the study was to investigate view of postmenopausal women with rheumatoid arthritis to complementary and alternative medicine methods.

Method: In this study, 48 postmenopausal women were included. The data on age, gender, economic and educational status, drugs used, chronic illnesses, family history of RA and habits of the participating individuals were recorded by researchers. The data form was prepared by researchers which investigated time to start of DMARD treatment, patients' levels of knowledge about RA, information sources and applications of complementary and alternative medicine. The questionnaire was administered face to face to the volunteers.

Results: The mean age of individuals was 49.95 ± 12.72 . 28.4% of women have family history of RA. The mean year of first joint swelling was 10.97 ± 7.82 , 38% of women who was diagnosed with the disease, stated DMARD treatment after 6 months. The most commonly used drugs are Methotrexate (75.5%) and Steroids (56.4%). 35.8% of women with HT is accompanied by RA. 54% of women expressed that they aren't sufficiently informed about RA. The sources of information about RA included doctors, other patients, television and internet. 34.6% of women stated that they applied to alternative medicine. Commonly used complementary and alternative therapies included spa treatment, mud-bath and herbal products such as flaxseed, green tea and black cumin.

Conclusion: RA is a progressive disease with wide spread focal joint destruction. Thus, it seems that patients apply to various methods to maintain general well-being. The fact is that the ideal treatment has not been reached yet and this situation increases the expectation from CAM (Complementary and Alternative Methods) methods of the patients. Further studies performed on scientific evidence and larger patient groups are needed to evaluate the influence of CAM methods to RA patients.

Biography

Banu Bayar has graduated from Hacettepe University School of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation in 1994. She has completed both her Master's (1996-1998) and Doctorate (1998-2002) at Hacettepe University Institute of Health Sciences. She has been working as a Lecturer at Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University School of Health Sciences Department of Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation since 2006. Her field expertise is Orthotic and Geriatric Rehabilitation.

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