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Attitudes toward using complementary and alternative therapies of cancer care between patients and health care professionals in Taiwan

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The purpose of this study was to explore the attitudes toward using complementary and alternative (CAM) therapies among cancer patients in Taiwan. A qualitative design based on in-depth interviews was conducted with participants treated at the oncology outpatient department of a teaching hospital in Northern Taiwan. In total, 26 cancer patients completed the interviews. A content analysis of the interviews revealed four themes: the items of selected CAM, the purpose for using CAM, factors affecting patients' attitude in using CAM, and the dialogue between patients and health professionals in using CAM. In this study, 58% and 81% of the patients used CAM before and after cancer diagnosis. The major CAM methods chosen by the patients included: religious rites (38.5%), natural products (34.6%), acupuncture (23.1%) / natural products (80.8%), and Chinese herbs (57.7%). The major purpose of using CAM for the patients was to decrease the side effects of chemotherapy and reduce physical discomfort. Health care professionals' recommendations, evidence of the CAM's efficiency, and costs were the major factors affecting patients' attitudes towards using CAM. Patients hoped for health care professionals to treat them like family when the professionals communicated their attitudes towards using CAM. However, only 4 of the 26 participants (15.4%) communicated with health care professionals about the use of CAM. Health care professionals should understand patients' status and attitudes toward using CAM and establish an effective dialogue with them.

Biography

Hung-Ru Lin, has completed her PhD from University of Massachusetts Amherst. She is a professor and director of school of nursing at National Taipei University of Nursing and Health Sciences in Taiwan. Besides teaching and professional services, she continued to participate in research studies. She has published more than forty articles in Taiwan and international journals.

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