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Complementary and alternative therapies in cancer: Current trends and implications for Oncologists

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Worldwide, an estimated 10-80% of individuals are diagnosed with cancer use complementary, alternative or integrative therapies during cancer treatment. Women with breast cancer are among the highest users of such therapies and usage has been increasing. Many such alternative therapies are unproven or were studied to not have any significant benefits, rather can even be harmful. Patients appear increasingly willing to discuss the use of these remedies, especially when asked by their oncologists. In order to encourage open communication of complementary/alternative medicine use by their patients, oncologists should be knowledgeable about the most commonly used remedies. Patients should be advised to avoid questionable alternative therapies in a receptive, evidence-based atmosphere. On the other hand, complementary therapies that help manage depression, anxiety, pain, nausea, fatigue and other symptoms should be integrated into the patient's overall care. Evidence regarding the efficacy and safety of such therapies is reviewed and implications for oncologists are discussed.

Biography

Shilpi Roy Narad has done her M.D (Radiation Oncology) from Kasturba Medical College, Manipal-India in 2011. She has been previously associated with Shirdi Sai Baba Cancer Hospital and Research Centre, Manipal and Fortis Hospital, Gurgaon -India. She also was last associated with B.L. Kapoor Multi-Specialty Hospital, New Delhi as Attending Consultant. And she has special experience in being part of the setting up of a new Department, making departmental protocols, active participation in treatment machine commissioning, making workflow, training staffs, etc. in Fortis Hospital, Gurgaon.

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