to listen, they were more like to reveal the use of CAM [17]. These suggest that to effectively establish patient-doctor communication, doctors should actively screen about the use of CAM in each patient and encourage patients to provide detailed information on their use, especially herbal medicine use. Furthermore, doctors need to know enough about commonly used herbal medicines, as well as potentially harmful herb-drug and herb-herb interactions, to provide reliable information to guide appropriate use. We believe that herbal medicine use is a double-edged sword; appropriate use will help cancer treatments and improve QOL, whereas inappropriate use may result in harmful herb-drug or herb-herb interactions and in turn worsen health status and QOL. The key to avoiding harmful herb-drug or herb-herb interactions, maintaining patient safety and improving patient well-being is open communication between patients and doctors about CAM use.

In conclusion, given that a high prevalence of CAM use and the high risk of potentially harmful herb-drug interaction among cancer patients, patient–doctor communication about CAM use is an extremely important part of cancer care. The development and evaluation of effective interventions to improve the disclosure of CAM use should be an integral part of the future research in this area.

References

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