

EP13.10

The use of complementary and alternative medicine for cancer patients in primary care

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Background & Aim: With an ageing population and modern diagnostic techniques, cancer is an increasing bio-psycho-social morbidity in primary care populations. For alleviation of this burden, patients are increasingly turning to Complementary and Alternative Medicines (CAMs). With mainstream acceptance and easier access, it is important for Primary Care practitioners to familiarise themselves with this growing field. This poster promotes the awareness of CAM in cancer patients in order to facilitate fully informed decision making.

Method: We present a review of key studies on CAM for cancer patients based on literature relating to Primary Care Oncology in the UK, with lessons for all practitioners managing the global burden of malignancy.

Results: We highlight the core principles, therapies, popularity in different malignancies, advantages, disadvantages and some general guidance for the conscientious integration of CAM into Primary Care Oncology.

Conclusions: With limited objective evidence but growing subjective benefits, primary care practitioners should be more aware of CAMs. This poster supports an informed, ethical and sensitive approach to this increasingly popular field.