

PERCEPTION OF COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE AMONGST PATIENTS WITH BREAST CANCER: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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INTRODUCTION

- Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) is broadly defined as as those practices or products that are typically outside of conventional or mainstream medical practice (1)
- Previous studies have reported that up to 75% of breast cancer patients use at least one form of CAM after diagnosis (2)
- Despite the wide use of CAM amongst breast cancer patients, there is a paucity of data that examines the perception and motivation for its use.
- The purpose of this systematic review is to investigate the use of CAM in breast cancer patients and to explore:
 - The motivation behind its use
 - The different types or modalities of CAM that are used
 - Patient perception of the use of CAM

METHODS

- A systematic literature search was conducted on Medline, Embase, Psychinfo, Emcare, and CINAHL from database inception to August 2024.
- Articles were screened for inclusion independently by two reviewers (LS and CH) and conflicts were resolved by a third reviewer (HW).
- Studies designed to evaluate patients’ perception of CAM were included, whereas studies exclusively evaluating clinical outcomes were excluded.
- The data extraction focused on study characteristics, CAM modalities, and patient perceptions.

RESULTS

- Following duplicate removal, 553 studies were screened, leading to the inclusion of 20 studies
- The CAMs investigated were:
 - Whole Medical Systems:
 - Mixed CAM and biologically based particles (11/20, 55%)
 - Traditional Chinese medicine (4/20, 20%)
 - Traditional Ghanaian medicine (1/20, 5%)
 - Mind-body therapies
 - Yoga (2/20, 10%)
 - Aerobic exercise and meditation training (1/20, 5%),
 - Music therapy (1/20, 5%),
- Patients’ motivations for receiving CAM, including improving their health, belief in a natural lifestyle, curing cancer, and improving quality of life.
- Use of CAM was influenced by advice of close friends, social networks or family (reported in 6 of the studies).
- Patients’ negative perceptions of CAM stemmed from undesirable side effects such as fatigue, pain and lack of efficacy as well as financial cost.

Table 1. Summary of Trials included in Systematic Review

Range of years of publication	2015-2024
Total number of countries studied	17
	5 continents (10 Asia, 4 Europe, 1 Africa, 1 North America, 1 Australia)
Total number of patients	2737
Median number of patients/study	41
Breast cancer Stage	
Early Stage (0-III)	93.4% (range 83.3-100%)
Metastatic Stage IV	7.7% (range 0-16.7%)

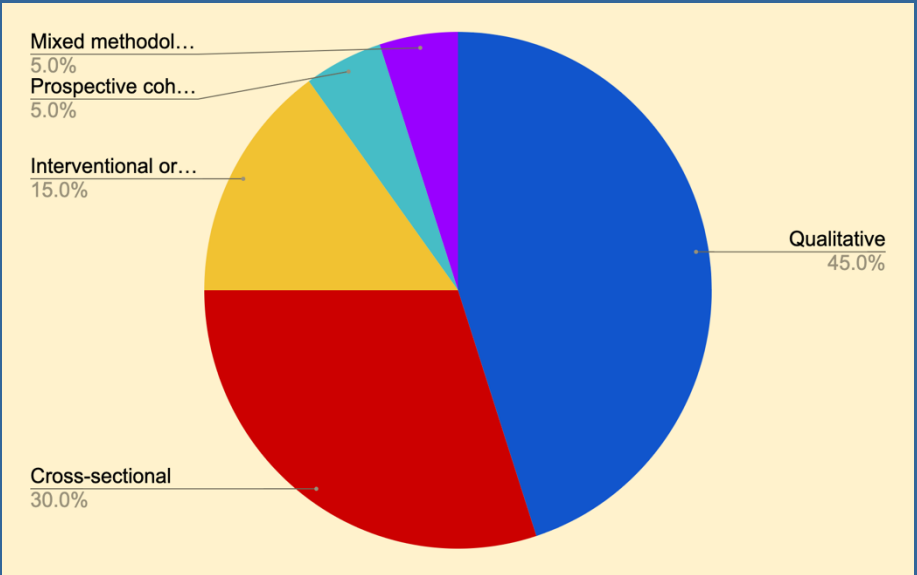


Figure 1. Breakdown of Different Study Design

DISCUSSION

- There is a wide range of CAM utilized by patients with breast cancer
- The motivation is primarily from a desire to improve symptoms, cure cancer or improve quality of life
- Influence or guidance around CAM use was seldom from Healthcare providers (<10%), up to 2/3 of patients do not disclose to their providers
- Patients were more likely to find CAM helpful with symptom management rather than disease control

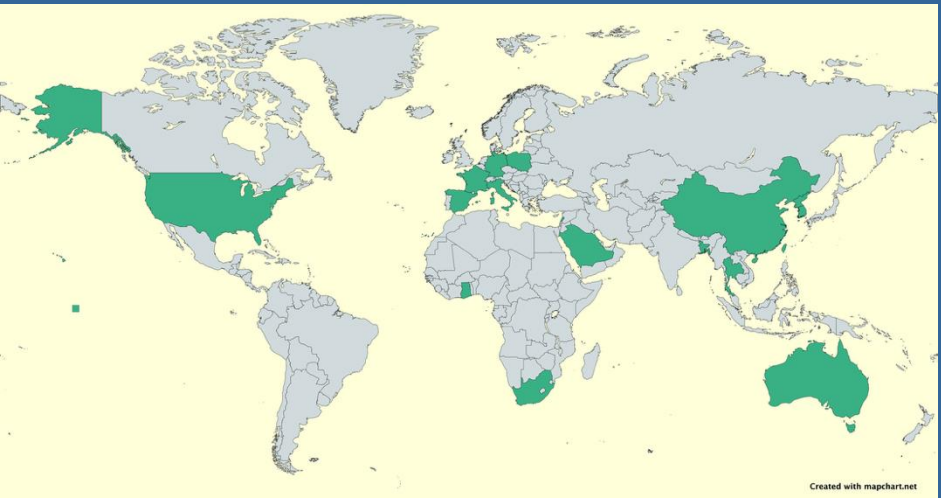


Figure 1. Geographic locations of the included studies.

CONCLUSIONS

Patients with breast cancer have a high utilization of CAM to improve or maintain their health and quality of life. Healthcare professionals need to be well-informed about evidence-based CAM modalities to facilitate discussions and provide appropriate referrals when indicated. informed

REFERENCES

- 1) <https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/complementary-alternative-or-integrative-health-whats-in-a-name>
- 2) Matthews AK, Sellergren SA, Huo D, List M, Fleming G. Complementary and alternative medicine use among breast cancer survivors. J Altern Complement Med. 2007;13(5):555–562..