

# INTEGRATIVE ONCOLOGY IN SOCIAL MEDIA: PRESENTING UNBIASED AND ACTIONABLE INFORMATION FOR ONCOLOGY PATIENTS

## Introduction

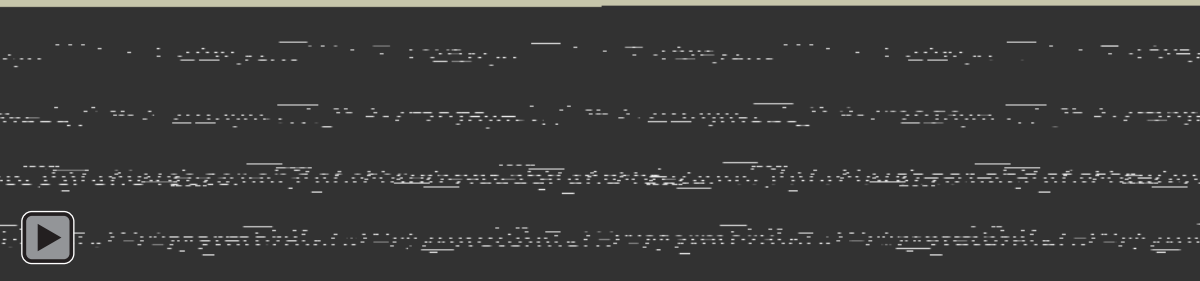
Social media has become an influential source of health information for cancer patients and their caregivers. Surveys indicate that 65% of cancer patients are likely to use social media to inform medical decisions, and between 40–84% seek integrative approaches to support their care alongside conventional treatment.<sup>1,2</sup> These trends underscore a critical need for strategies that promote the dissemination of accurate, balanced, and evidence-based integrative oncology content within social media networks. <sup>3</sup>

**KNOW** and **CancerChoices** are educational non-profit organizations that review and report on human clinical trials in oncology for both healthcare providers and patients. Together, they collaborate to produce unbiased, evidence-informed social media content on integrative therapies. The goal is to educate patients about available integrative interventions, without promoting or discouraging their use, and to empower them with credible information they can share with their healthcare teams to support shared decision-making.

## Methodology

KNOW systematically searches PubMed and Embase for all human clinical trials in oncology care where supportive nutrition or natural health products are used. Searches are conducted quarterly, and identified data is subjected to parallel screening. CancerChoices utilizes data from KNOW and PubMed to present reliable information written for patients presented online at cancerchoices.org. Together, these organizations developed and used a social media post framework to share integrative oncology research with patients as the primary audience. Content was written at a 10th-grade reading level. Posts were shared in a collaborative format between CancerChoices and KNOW Oncology's Facebook and Instagram pages between 5/13/25-5/23/25. Post-enhancement strategies were used to broaden reach and increase engagement. The social media post comment section was moderated daily to answer questions and provide additional resources when required.

## Results



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Topic	Facebook		Instagram	
	Reach	Content Interaction	Reach	Content Interaction
Can melatonin help during breast cancer treatment?	44,427	1,512	563	68
Can protein support rehab in brain tumor patients?	24,618	1,891	202	27
Can a heart-healthy diet protect you during chemo?	84,636	2,164	194	24
Can high-dose vitamin C help people with pancreatic cancer live longer?	11,172	1,911	286	39

Instagram and Facebook posts include:

- Introduce the integrative therapy,
- The study design and findings,
- How to discuss the therapy with your doctor,
- Relevant considerations,
- Links to read the study in full.

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## Discussion

Engagement with the posts was notably higher than industry benchmarks, though there is a lack of prospective studies to substantiate this.

While the posts generated strong engagement, ensuring clear understanding remained a challenge. Simplified visuals and concise messaging helped draw attention, but some users engaged primarily with the graphic or headline, leading to occasional misinterpretation of nuanced information presented later in the post.

Moderation played a critical role in fostering constructive dialogue, using an empathetic tone to answer questions, clarify misinterpretations, and redirect conversations when inaccurate or potentially harmful information was shared. In such instances, moderators provided links to credible resources to support evidence-based responses and further educate commenters.

## Conclusion

Social media posts developed collaboratively by multidisciplinary practitioners can provide reliable information for patients on integrative supportive care and ways in which they can be discussed with their healthcare team.

### References:

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2. O'Brien K, Ried K, Binjemain T, Sali A. Integrative Approaches to the Treatment of Cancer. *Cancers (Basel).* 2022;14(23):5933. Published 2022 Nov 30. doi:10.3390/cancers14235933
3. Braun LA, Zomorodbakhsch B, Keinki C, Huebner J. Information needs, communication and usage of social media by cancer patients and their relatives. *J Cancer Res Clin Oncol.* 2019;145(7):1865-1875. doi:10.1007/s00432-019-02929-9

Collaborating  
Organizations:

