Alternative Medicine and Palliative Care

Kelly Prendergast Nestor MSN, ANP-BC
Western Mainline Medical Associates
Villanova University
Assistant Clinical Professor
April 13, 2011

Disclosures

- No conflicts of interest

Objectives

- Define complementary medicine and palliative care
- Discuss how they can be used in combination
- Look at the benefits of complementary medicine in palliative care
- Review common complementary medicine practices for patients being treated for cancer

Palliative Care

- WHO: "An approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problems associated with life threatening illnesses, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems—physical, psychological and spiritual. The goals of care are to alleviate symptoms in a compassionate way, neither hasten or postpone death and to provide a system to both the family and patient, integrating the psychological and spiritual aspects of patient care, throughout the trajectory of illness."

Hospice

- An extension of the WHO palliative care definition
- Skilled, compassionate care introduced to treatment continuum at the conclusion of curative-remitting therapy to the end of life.
- Interdisciplinary
  - Medical
  - Nursing
  - Spiritual
  - Psychological
  - Emotional

What’s the difference?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Palliative Care</th>
<th>Hospice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary care integrated from diagnosis to death</td>
<td>Interdisciplinary care in the end of life phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimize management of active, progressive disease and symptoms</td>
<td>Optimize symptom management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimize quality of life</td>
<td>Forgo all life prolonging treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Optimize quality of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A form of Palliative Care</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Care Team: Palliative Care

- Patient
- Family/Friends
- Physicians/Nurse Practitioners
- Nursing (RN, LPN)
- CNAs
- Social Workers
- Chaplains
- Therapists

Complementary Alternative Medicine

“A group of different medical and health care systems, practices and products that are not presently considered to be part of conventional medicine. Complementary medicine is used in together with conventional medicine.”

National Institutes of Cancer

Alternative Medicine

Stopping therapeutic conventional medical treatment in favor of treating malignancy with alternative unapproved therapy

Integrative Medicine

Treatment that combines conventional medicine with safe and effective CAM therapies.

Who is using CAM?

- National Health survey (2007)
  - 4.30 Americans using some type of CAM
  - 4.30 Americans with pain using CAM

- National Cancer Institute (2010)
  - As many as 6.10 cancer survivors used CAM
  - Some studies say as many as 8.10 pediatric cancer patients used some form of CAM

What are we talking about?

- Natural
- Mind-Body
- Manipulative
- Body Practice
Natural
- Herbal remedies
- Probiotics
- Supplements

Mind Body
- Yoga
- Hypnotherapy
- Guided imagery
- Meditation
- Acupuncture
- Tai Chi
- Qi Gong
- Meditation
- Reiki

Manipulative
- Chiropractics
- Massage

Body Practice - Movement therapy
- Reiki
- Pilates

Why integrated into Palliative Care?
- Conventional medicine often times can't do it all
- Many people don't want to take additional medication for symptom management and/or it simply isn't effective

Target populations
- Malignant diseases
- Heart Failure
- COPD
- Neuromuscular diseases
- Dementias
GOALS?

- Symptom management
- Improve quality of life

How do we integrate CAM and Palliative Care?

- SLOWLY!

Symptoms that are responsive to CAM

- Pain
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Dyspnea/respiratory distress
- Anorexia/nausea/vomiting
- Fatigue

Pain

- Acupuncture
- Massage
- Yoga
- Chiropractics
- Hypnosis

Anxiety

- Hypnosis
- Acupuncture
- Natural remedies
- Massage
- Aromatherapy
- Pet therapy

Depression

- Acupuncture
- Hypnosis
- Natural remedies
- Art therapy
- Pet therapy
Dyspnea/respiratory distress
- Massage
- Music therapy
- Pet therapy
- Reiki

Anorexia/nausea/vomiting
- Natural remedies
- Acupuncture
- Hypnosis

Fatigue
- Yoga
- Hypnosis

Outcomes: Research

How do we pay for CAM?
- Cost?
  - First visit/consultation fees?
  - A routine visit?
  - How many visits do I need?

- Who pays?
  - Very few insurance companies cover therapies, some have small cost deductions
  - US adults spent $33.9 billion in 2007 on visits to practitioners, products, classes and materials OUT OF POCKET

What can we do as RNs: Educate
- Stay educated as professionals and understand integrative therapies
  - What benefits can be expected from this therapy
  - What are the risks associated with this therapy
  - Do the known benefits outweigh the risk
  - What side effects can be expected
  - Will the therapy interfere with conventional therapy
  - Will the therapy be covered by insurance
Education

- Educate our patients
  - Understand drug interactions between natural preparations and conventional medications
  - Tolerability of therapy
  - Not curative
  - Palliative

Our job is to be.....

Open minded

Education: Resources

- Be able to provide resources for our patients to explore CAM on their own
  - NCCAM (National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine) [www.nccam.nih.gov](http://www.nccam.nih.gov)
  - NCI (National Cancer Institute) [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)
  - PDQ (National Cancer Institute Database) [www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/pdq](http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/pdq)
  - NHPCO (National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization) [www.NHPCO.org](http://www.NHPCO.org)