

## Complementary therapies – exploring preferences to inform a model of care

Linda Nolte, [Amanda Piper](#), Michael Jefford, Darren Hunter

### Amanda Piper

Project Manager at the Australian Cancer Survivorship Centre  
B.Sc, MHA, MPH

Australian Cancer Survivorship Centre  
University of Melbourne

## Background

- Long-standing but limited Integrative Therapies program at Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre (East Melbourne campus)
- A recent survey at our Bendigo Radiation Therapy Campus revealed 45% reported current use of complementary therapies (45%)<sup>1</sup>
- Mid-2016 East Melbourne moves to a new facility



1. Hunter et al Support Care Cancer 2014;(22):1571-1578

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## Project Aims

- To understand preferences regarding use of Complementary and Alternative Medicines in people affected by cancer
- To gather information that could be used to improve the existing integrative therapies program



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## Methods

- Refined survey tool used in a previous project at our Bendigo Campus<sup>1</sup>
- Changes to survey tool informed by local context, relevant literature, content experts and consumer feedback
  - Include carers (not just patients)
  - Include East Melbourne Integrative Therapies program
  - Broaden complementary therapies and allow respondents to self-describe the therapies they use
- Participants recruited from inpatient and ambulatory areas

1. Hunter et al Support Care Cancer 2014;(22):1571-1578

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## Results-Demographics

- 191 returned (87% patients, 13% carers)
- Male (43%) : Female (57%)
- 34% live in a regional or rural area
- 76% identified themselves as in treatment



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## Currently using complementary therapies?

- 45% currently using one or more complementary therapy (n=86)
  - Includes vitamins/herbs, mind-body, creative and body based therapies
- 29% using complementary medicines (CM) and products (n=54)
- 50% have not discussed CM with their cancer specialist (n=24)
  - 73% because their 'Doctor never raised' (n=11)



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## Use of Peter Mac Integrative Therapies program

	Yes	No
Meditation* (n=183)	14 (8%)	169 (92%)
Hand and foot massage (n=186)	28 (15%)	158 (85%)
Music Therapy (n=178)	7 (4%)	171 (96%)
Reflexology (n=178)	10 (6%)	168 (94%)

\*Therapy open to patients and carers

## Preferences regarding access (Top 5)

	Like to receive at Peter Mac	Like to receive near home	Not interested	Don't know what this is
Oncology massage (n=155)	62 (40%)	51 (33%)	38 (25%)	11 (7%)
Dietary education and advice (n=163)	63 (39%)	59 (36%)	45 (28%)	0 (0%)
Relaxation (n=160)	51 (32%)	64 (40%)	50 (31%)	4 (3%)
Support Groups (n=158)	45 (28%)	52 (33%)	66 (42%)	2 (1%)
Physical exercise (n=163)	44 (28%)	76 (46%)	47 (29%)	1 (1%)

## Value of complementary therapies

	Strongly agree/ Agree	Neutral	Disagree/ Strongly disagree
Complementary therapies <i>should</i> be provided in Cancer Centres	139 (79%)	31 (18%)	7 (4%)
Cancer Centres should provide complementary therapies <i>even if it means people have to pay for the therapy</i>	104 (62%)	45 (27%)	19 (11%)
Cancer Centres should focus on delivering medical treatment and <i>not spend resources on complementary therapies</i>	34 (20%)	38 (23%)	96 (57%)

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## Conclusions

- Complementary therapies are commonly used and valued
  - Opportunity to improve communication on this topic by health professionals.
- Many were unaware of our existing program
  - Opportunity to improve and expand our Integrative Therapies program.
- Some of the therapies people value are available in the community
  - Opportunity to improve how we connect people to appropriate care



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