The Use of Complementary and Alternative Medicine by Women with Breast Cancer in Saudi Arabia

Breast cancer is a significant problem and is the main cause of cancer-related mortality in Saudi Arabia. It is estimated that the age-standardized incidence rate for breast cancer was 22.4 per 100,000 women in 2008, and the age-standardized mortality rate was 10.4 per 100,000 women. Symptom distress is common and health-related quality of life (HRQOL) is negatively impacted. Although the use of complementary and alternative medical (CAM) therapy is common among breast cancer patients in the US, the use among women with breast cancer in Saudi Arabia is not well understood. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the association among the types of CAM use, the demographic, and clinical factors among women with breast cancer in Saudi Arabia. The Symptom Management Theory was used to guide this study. A descriptive cross-sectional study design was used and convenience sample of 85 women with breast cancer who were undergoing active cancer treatments was obtained from the in the oncology department at King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre, in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The Use of Complementary Therapies Survey (UCTS) was used to measure CAM use. SPSS was used to run descriptive statistics and univariate and multivariate analyses was used to explore relationships among the types of CAM use, the demographic, and clinical factors. The findings show that all women had used at least three methods of CAM. The personal characteristics can influence symptom management strategies (CAM use). Positive correlations between time since diagnosis and specific CAM types maybe explained that's some types were explained by low cost. The results of this study will guide future studies examining the efficacy of CAM on symptom management in Saudi Arabian women with breast cancer. These findings will serve as basis for future research examining CAM use in symptom management of breast cancer and other types of cancer.