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Effect of vedic hymns on response to neoadjuvant chemotherapy in breast cancer: A randomized clinical study

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Introduction: Vedic hymns are the oldest layers of Sanskrit literature and oldest scriptures of Hinduism considered sacred by vedic religion. Integrative oncology is being studied and considered for complete cancer care. Benefits of yoga have been established and it is being offered at many centers. The healing effect of spirituality and prayers are well recognized. Prayers act by relieving stress. People who worship regularly are more optimistic and hopeful and are less stressed. They have a strong immune system, lower blood pressure and a better capacity to face adversity.

Aims & Objectives: To assess the effects of vedic hymns on response to neoadjuvant chemotherapy and to assess the effects of these hymns on the quality of life of the patients

Materials & Methods: A randomized clinical study was done in patients of breast cancer that were taken up for neoadjuvant chemotherapy. Patients were matched for age, stage of disease, and co-morbidities. Patients were randomized into two groups by closed envelope method. Group 1- Patients that underwent neoadjuvant chemotherapy and were counseled to listen to vedic hymns during neoadjuvant chemotherapy. Group II- Patients that underwent neoadjuvant chemotherapy but were not subjected to hymns. Response to neo-adjvant chemotherapy was assessed using RECIST criteria [clinical and sonological]. Responders were those with >50% reduction in tumor size. Non-Responders were <50% reduction, stable disease or progression. The Hospital anxiety and depression score (HAD score) was also used to assess the quality of life of these patients. Vedic hymn used was Gayatri mantra

Results: Of these 30 patients who participated in our study 20 patients (66%) patients were responders and of these 20 patients, 13 (65%) belonged to the group 1, which is statically significant. Group 1 minimum HAD score of 2 and maximum HAD score of 6. Group 2- minimum HAD score 7 and maximum of 13. The difference in HAD score is statistically significant.

Conclusion: There was significant increase in response to neoadjuvant chemotherapy in the group that listened to vedic hymns. There was overall better performance in the hymns group as compared to group II.

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