

to listen, they were more like to reveal the use of CAM [17]. These suggest that to effectively establish patient-doctor communication, doctors should actively screen about the use of CAM in each patient and encourage patients to provide detailed information on their use, especially herbal medicine use. Furthermore, doctors need to know enough about commonly used herbal medicines, as well as potentially harmful herb-drug and herb-herb interactions, to provide reliable information to guide appropriate use. We believe that herbal medicine use is a double-edged sword; appropriate use will help cancer treatments and improve QOL, whereas inappropriate use may result in harmful herb-drug or herb-herb interactions and in turn worsen health status and QOL. The key to avoiding harmful herb-drug or herb-herb interactions, maintaining patient safety and improving patient well-being is open communication between patients and doctors about CAM use.

In conclusion, given that a high prevalence of CAM use and the high risk of potentially harmful herb-drug interaction among cancer patients, patient-doctor communication about CAM use is an extremely important part of cancer care. The development and evaluation of effective interventions to improve the disclosure of CAM use should be an integral part of the future research in this area.

References

1. National centre for complementary and alternative medicine (2013) What is complementary and alternative medicine?
2. National center for complementary and alternative medicine (2013) Statistics on complementary and alternative medicine national health interview survey.
3. Richardson MA, Sanders T, Palmer JL, Greisinger A, Singletary SE (2000) Complementary/alternative medicine use in a comprehensive cancer center and the implications for oncology. *J Clin Oncol* 18: 2505-2514.
4. Myers C, Stuber ML, Bonamer-Rheingans JI, Zeltzer LK (2005) Complementary therapies and childhood cancer. *Cancer Control* 12: 172-180.
5. Shen J, Andersen R, Albert PS, Wenger N, Glaspy J, et al. (2002) Use of complementary/alternative therapies by women with advanced-stage breast cancer. *BMC Complement Altern Med* 2: 8.
6. Helyer LK, Chin S, Chui BK, Fitzgerald B, Verma S, et al. (2006) The use of complementary and alternative medicines among patients with locally advanced breast cancer—a descriptive study. *BMC Cancer* 6: 39.
7. Wyatt G, Sikorskii A, Wills CE, Su H (2010) Complementary and alternative medicine use, spending, and quality of life in early stage breast cancer. *Nurs Res* 59: 58-66.
8. Greenlee H, Kwan ML, Ergas IJ, Sherman KJ, Krathwohl SE, et al. (2009) Complementary and alternative therapy use before and after breast cancer diagnosis: the Pathways Study. *Breast Cancer Res Treat* 117: 653-665.
9. Buettnner C, Kroenke CH, Phillips RS, Davis RB, Eisenberg DM, et al. (2006) Correlates of use of different types of complementary and alternative medicine by breast cancer survivors in the nurses' health study. *Breast Cancer Res Treat* 100: 219-227.
10. Ma H, Carpenter CL, Sullivan-Halley J, Bernstein L (2011) The roles of herbal remedies in survival and quality of life among long-term breast cancer survivors—results of a prospective study. *BMC Cancer* 11: 222.
11. Izzo AA, Ernst E (2009) Interactions between herbal medicines and prescribed drugs: an updated systematic review. *Drugs* 69: 1777-1798.
12. Ben-Arye E, Attias S, Tadmor T, Schiff E (2010) Herbs in hemato-oncological care: an evidence-based review of data on efficacy, safety, and drug interactions. *Leuk Lymphoma* 51: 1414-1423.
13. McCune JS, Hatfield AJ, Blackburn AA, Leith PO, Livingston RB, et al. (2004) Potential of chemotherapy-herb interactions in adult cancer patients. *Support Care Cancer* 12: 454-462.
14. Tachjian A, Maria V, Jahangir A (2010) Use of herbal products and potential interactions in patients with cardiovascular diseases. *J Am Coll Cardiol* 55: 515-525.
15. Sparreboom A, Cox MC, Acharya MR, Figg WD (2004) Herbal remedies in the United States: potential adverse interactions with anticancer agents. *J Clin Oncol* 22: 2489-2503.
16. Bent S, Ko R (2004) Commonly used herbal medicines in the United States: a review. *Am J Med* 116: 478-485.
17. Davis EL, Oh B, Butow PN, Mullan BA, Clarke S (2012) Cancer patient disclosure and patient-doctor communication of complementary and alternative medicine use: a systematic review. *Oncologist* 17: 1475-1481.