

Original Article

Knowledge and Opinions of Nursing Students Regarding Complementary and Alternative Medicine for Cancer Patients

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Abstract

Background: Cancer patients and their families resort to complementary and alternative medicine practices in order to cope with the effects of the difficult conventional treatments. Student nurses are aware of these practices.

Aim: The current study aimed to determine nursing students' knowledge and opinions regarding complementary and alternative medicine practices in cancer patients, and the factors influencing the students' opinions on this issue.

Methodology: This descriptive study was carried out with 148 students. Data collection was implemented by means of a literature-based questionnaire developed by the researchers.

Results: Students were more knowledgeable about complementary and alternative medicine practices such as acupuncture (39.2%), and religious practices (34.5%). Only 20.9% of them expressed that they often received information via media and internet, but 58.8% of them thought that this information was insufficient. A majority were in favor of the integration of complementary and alternative practices in the nursing curriculum. Many of them considered they could be implemented together with other medical practices within a multidisciplinary approach, and stated that they did not know if any nursing practice included complementary and alternative treatments.

Conclusions: Student nurses had insufficient knowledge about complementary and alternative medicine practices, but they wanted to learn about them. In general, students had positive opinions towards the use of complementary and alternative medicine for cancer patients. Therefore, complementary and alternative practices could be included in the nursing curriculum and nursing practices.

Keywords: Cancer; nursing; nursing students; complementary practices.