

Health Insights Today

A SERVICE OF CLEVELAND CHIROPRACTIC COLLEGE

July/August 2009, Volume 2, Issue 4

CAM In Review

Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) includes a wide range of healing practices. These are among recently published research articles in this developing field, from The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine, the leading scholarly journal in the field.

When reading reports on new research, it is important to remember that no single study should be seen as providing the whole truth. The following reports offer helpful clues but in most cases further research is needed before firm conclusions can be drawn.

Aloe Vera Outperforms Topical Steroid for Psoriasis

Researchers reported at the International Congress of Dermatology that a topical application from the gel of the aloe vera plant, long reputed to have healing effects for burns and other skin problems, outperformed a topical medication widely used for the rashes of psoriasis. As reported in *Medical News*, patients treated with aloe vera had a significantly greater reduction in the Psoriasis Area and Severity Index (PASI) after eight weeks of treatment ... Topical steroids are a mainstay of conventional medical treatment for psoriasis, but chronic use increases the risk of adverse effects locally and systemically.

Choonhakarn C et al. A prospective randomized clinical trial comparing topical aloe vera with 0.1% triamcinolone acetonide in chronic plaque psoriasis" *ICD 2009*; Abstract P347.

Massage Therapy Eases Recovery for Breast Cancer Patients

In a study of 51 patients undergoing conventional treatment for breast cancer, researchers measured anxiety, pain, nausea, sleep quality, and quality of life. Treatment consisted of one 30-minute treatment per week for 3 consecutive weeks. Participants experienced a reduction in several quality of life symptom concerns after 3 weeks of massage therapy. Respondents' cumulative results for state anxiety, sleep quality, and quality of life functioning showed significant improvement. Among study participants, there was variability in reported episodes of nausea, vomiting, and retching; although participants reported decreased pain and distress, changes were non-significant. The researchers concluded that, "Therapeutic massage shows potential benefits for ameliorating the effects of breast cancer treatment by reducing side effects of chemotherapy and radiation and improving perceived quality of life and overall functioning."

Sturgeon M, Wetta-Hal R, Hart T et al. Effects of Therapeutic Massage on the Quality of Life Among Patients with Breast Cancer During Treatment. *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*. April 2009, 15(4): 373-380.

Magnetic Field Therapy May Help Multiple Sclerosis Patients with Exhaustion

In a pilot study designed to evaluate the long-term effects of Bio-Electro-Magnetic-Energy-Regulation (BEMER) on MS-related fatigue, 37 relapsing-remitting MS patients with MS were treated with BEMER magnetic field treatment for 8 minutes twice daily in comparison to placebo for 12 weeks. The primary outcome criterion was change in the Modified Fatigue Impact Scale (MFIS) between baseline and 12 weeks. The secondary outcome criteria were changes of the Fatigue Severity Scale (FSS), a general depression scale—long version (ADS-L), Multiple Sclerosis Functional

Health Insights Today

A SERVICE OF CLEVELAND CHIROPRACTIC COLLEGE

July/August 2009, Volume 2, Issue 4

Page 2

Scale (MSFC), and the Expanded Disability Status Scale (EDSS). There was evidence of a significant difference of MFIS value (the primary outcome criterion) after 12 weeks in favor of the BEMER group. In addition, FSS values were significantly lower in the BEMER group after 12 weeks.

Piatkowski J, Kern S, Ziemssen T. Effect of BEMER Magnetic Field Therapy on the Level of Fatigue in Patients with Multiple Sclerosis: A Randomized, Double-Blind Controlled Trial. *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*. May 2009, 15(5): 507-511

Topical B12 Helpful for Children with Eczema

Topical vitamin B12 is thought to decrease the symptoms involved in eczema through reducing nitric oxide production. Atopic dermatitis affects 5%–20% of children in the United States. Various treatment options are available to treat atopic dermatitis in children, but there are drawbacks to some of these options. Children tend to need a larger dose of medication for body surface area involved and can be more adversely affected by agents such as topical steroids. This was a double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled study involving patients from 6 months to 18 years old. Skin checks using a standardized scoring system were done at baseline, and 2 and 4 weeks. Twenty-one (21) patients completed the study. The skin treated with topical vitamin B12 improved significantly more than placebo-treated skin at 2 and 4 weeks.

Januchowski R. Evaluation of Topical Vitamin B12 for the Treatment of Childhood Eczema. *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*. April 2009, 15(4): 387-389.