

ABSTRACT

The study was carried out in Uganda Cancer Institute to determine the use of Complementary and Alternative medicine among cancer patients.

Background: There has been a substantial increase in the use of complementary and alternative therapies among cancer patients. However, considering the lack of evidence to support the efficacy of many of these CAM therapies, the potential for adverse effects, cost considerations, and the trend towards making treatment decisions based on evidence, many medical practitioners entreat caution in the use of CAM.

Objective: To assess the use of Complementary and alternative medicine among cancer patients in Uganda Cancer Institute.

Methodology: The study employed a descriptive cross sectional design in which quantitative data was collected from 250 patients attending the out-patients clinic at Uganda Cancer Institute.

Results: The study revealed that 74.7% of the participants used CAM. Spiritual practices, herbal medicine, natural supplements and vitamins were the main forms of CAM used. There are several reasons why CAM was used. The reasons cited for the use of CAM were to alleviate symptoms, prolong life, improve quality of life, cure the disease and boost immune system.

Conclusion: There is a steady increase in the use of CAM among patients with cancer. Spiritual practices, herbal medicine, natural supplements and vitamins were the main CAM remedies being used. Some of the reasons were to; cure the disease, alleviate symptoms, prolong life, boost immunity, and improve quality of life.

Recommendation: This should alert all the corresponding sectors to come together and find a way to incorporate CAM into the conventional medicine.