Integrating Mind, Body, and Spirit: The Alternative to Curing Cancer

Why is alternative and holistic medicine use for cancer patients being revisited now, when traditional treatment has not always been successful? What prevents holistic and alternative medicine from being researched, funded, and explored in America? Alternative and holistic medicine has been recently reintroduced as a way of preventing, treating, and curing cancer. How does it aid in the prevention, fight against and/or cure of cancer and why?

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“No other disease strikes as much fear deep within our souls as cancer… Most of us have witnessed firsthand the ravaging effect that cancer, as well as chemotherapy and radiation, has had on a loved one. Cancer statistics in the United States present us with some sobering facts. Each year, over 1,250,000 new cases of invasive cancers will be diagnosed, and additional 1,500,000 new cases of non-invasive cancers will be diagnosed, more than 500,000 people will die from cancer, cancer causes 1 in 5 of all deaths, cancer will affect 1 out of 3 people alive today. Fifty percent of those diagnosed with cancer will die of the disease. The economic toll of cancer will be greater than $110 billion” (Murray xi).

Cancer cases are rising significantly in the United States, each year, without significant success in treating the disease. Why is alternative and holistic medicine use for cancer patients being revisited now, when traditional treatment has not always been successful? What prevents holistic and alternative medicine from being researched, funded, and explored in America? Alternative and holistic medicine has been recently reintroduced as a way of preventing, treating, and curing cancer. How does it aid in the prevention, fight against and/or cure of cancer and why? Alternative treatments for cancer are becoming more popular because modern medicine does not treat the whole individual; it treats only the disease when it arises. Alternative medicine is controversial because it is not accepted in the medical field of physicians or the political society in America; therefore, it is not being funded or heavily researched. This new type of medicine has many different ways of being affective when preventing, treating, and curing cancer. Alternative medicine is a change in lifestyle; it is not a drug or antibiotic that is taken when an individual is ill. It is a way of life that changes people’s unhealthy habits that tend to be the leading causes of cancer. Alternative medicine is a challenging commitment; however, if attacked correctly, it can be much more effective than modern medicine.

There are two main types of healing: scientific healing and metaphysical healing. Scientific healing is based on the fact that viruses, microbes and other tiny invaders, variations in hormones and metabolism form body ailments. A scientific healer functions after the illness has occurred in the patient. These are the significant differences between a scientific healer and a metaphysical/holistic healer. The metaphysical healer provides a channel through which “healing powers from a divine force flow to the sick person” (LaPatra 28). This type of healing is based on faith and being “in-tune” with nature; it is also known as holistic, complementary, or alternative medicine (LaPatra 28-30). Holistic, complementary and alternative medicine has many different definitions. LaPatra describes this type of healing as “realizing how the body, mind, emotion, and spirit can work toward good health, it focuses on a person’s health and future health as a whole body practice” (1-4). Eisenberg defined alternative medicine as “techniques that are neither used as standard medical treatments nor taught in medical schools” (As qtd. in Sollner et al. 873-874). Ernst described complementary medicine as “diagnosis, treatment, and/or prevention which complements mainstream medicine by contributing to a common whole, by satisfying a demand not met by orthodoxy or by diversifying the conceptual framework of medicine” (As qtd. in Sollner et al. 873-874). The word holistic is derived from the Greek word holos, meaning whole. Flynn explains the idea of alternative and holistic medicine as: “a person is more than a nervous system, cardiovascular system, mind, etc….Therefore, the body can’t be
cured by just focusing on one of these aspects, which is why holistic medicine is effective, because it focuses on the whole-body. Holistic medicine is based on the fact that holism concludes that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts” (pg 3). Alternative and complementary health care reflect this conception of health care which involves the whole person in their environment and the relationship between the parts and the whole” (Flynn 1-4).

For the purpose of this paper alternative medicine, which includes complementary and holistic medicine into one medical alternative will be defined using The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) definition. This organization defines holistic, complementary and alternative medicine into one idea: as a “group of diverse medical and healthcare systems, practices, and products that are not presently considered to be part of conventional medicine but can include meditation, relaxation techniques, prayer, music and art therapy, acupuncture, biofeedback, visualization, and more” (Thiboldeaux, Golant 79-81).

Alternative medicine is an approach that recognizes every aspect of the person interacting in their environment. The emphasis is on harmony with oneself, nature and the world as a whole (LaPatra 28-30). Healers, unlike doctors, try to restore harmony within a person, which means they are simultaneously healing the body, mind, emotions, and spirit. This “total person” is a conglomeration of order, balance, and pleasing surroundings. In order to accomplish this whole-body experience, a person must live in accordance to nature, as nature is the foundation for alternative medicine. Flynn states that “you need to know what kind of person has the disease, not what kind of disease a person has” (pg 12). This quote states that a person is not the disease but rather involved in a “dynamic disturbance in the equilibrium of the body, mind, spirit and environment” (Flynn 9). Therefore, in holistic medicine a disease can be thought of as an insult to the body (LaPatra 1-4).

Patients of alternative healthcare are concerned with every aspect of their body, physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Patients of this system are connected with numerous different physicians, who are unbiased about their patient seeing other physicians. This approach to healthcare represents the patient’s needs as the most important aspect to healthiness, naturally. They understand that one doctor cannot help and treat their every need; therefore, they resort to a system that is able to treat their needs through different resources and physicians. This system allows patients to prevent many medical emergencies and necessities. Beginning this process requires dedication in evaluating the patient’s needs, goals, or problems and changing his/her lifestyle to meet the required needs (Olsen 9-11). For a very small portion of the American population, this process has been instilled in their lives since infants, for other it is a new phenomenon; however, the concept of natural medicine has essentially been established since the beginning of human time, when pharmaceutical drugs and doctors did not exist.

Alternative medicine is occasionally considered eastern medicine or miracles; however, history has proven that natural healing has been successfully practiced for thousands of years before the availability of modern medicine (LaPatra 1-4). A revolution in medicine and health care is underway. Thanks to American patients these alternative medicine practices are being explored more than ever in the American society because people are realizing that doctor’s interests are in a person’s illness, not their health. Americans are becoming more interested in whole body healing using the combination of scientific healing, practiced by modern physicians, and metaphysical healing which is provided by numerous different types of practitioners (LaPatra 1-4).
LaPatra gives seven different reasons why metaphysical healing exists and is persisting in the American society. First, he explains how any country with economic development and industrialization will begin to develop different types of medicine along with the continuing education of modern, scientific medicine. Secondly, immigration brings many alternative-lifestyles, one of which is different healing styles and ideas. Also, the lower socioeconomic classes in developed nations often do not have access to modern health care; therefore, alternatives are necessary and usually even preferred. Next, LaPatra explains how any country, in which modern medical care is largely unavailable and expensive, alternative healing systems will be present in the society. Many people choose metaphysical healing when orthodox medicine fails him/her; this is one more reason why alternative medicine is introduced and is growing in popularity. Another reason is because modern life becomes increasingly impersonal and technological; consequently, many people gravitate toward the warmth and spirit of metaphysical healing. Lastly, there has been a dramatic change in the consciousness and the value structure of the younger generations in the United States. Progressive alienations from the mainstream of culture have led to the formation of a counterculture, with an incredible range of alternative lifestyles, including alternative healing (LaPatra 32-34). This new type of medicine is being introduced and is creating a new generation of health care, as well as how people care for themselves.

Health care in America has reached an exciting crossroad. “The number of healing arts, practitioners, and people interested in alternative medicine is growing to a critical mass, fueling a new alternative health care industry” (Olsen 3-4). Finally, our society is realizing that we need to treat the whole person, not the disease (Olsen xiii-xv). Alternative health care practitioners are breaking ground in society; they are the pioneers of the new-age health system. Also, medical doctors are becoming more open to alternative approaches to healing the sickly; this combination is creating a more successful health care system; one that’s focused on the overall wellbeing of the patient and his/her overall needs of creating a “whole body”. “These pioneers have reintroduces ancient knowledge to the health marketplace” (Olsen 16-17).

In any health care system there are five different stages. Stage one is choosing a professional that is a good match for the illness at hand. The professional must have the skills and mindset to meet the patient’s goals and problems. It is important for a patient to stand up for what his/her beliefs are and ask questions, as well as listen to the support of the physician helping. The second state is the stage when doctors and patients exchange information. The practitioner should care about the patient’s needs and goals and be willing to refer the patient to another practitioner if he/she feels there is nothing that they can do to help the patient. Planning and deciding is the third stage. Throughout this stage there should be a combined effort, between the patient and physician, to help the patient’s illness and/or problems. Stage four is “doing it”, follow-up, and support. This stage is the most difficult to complete, because the patient actually has to “do it”. It is difficult because patients need to put their time, energy, and self on the line. Support is a large part of success in the fourth stage, the more patients supported throughout their care the more effective the health care system. The final stage is endings and closure. There are two parts to this step, the first is the natural conclusion of a plan or task, when a goal is accomplished and health is succeeded. The other aspect is “an interruption in treatment because one or both parties are dissatisfied with the situation and service” (Olsen 24-29). Even though all health care systems have this in common, there are significant similarities and differences between modern medicine and alternative or holistic medicine.
Patients and practitioners are very alike in the being; both represent values, feeling, experiences, expectations, and can use self perceptions towards their own health. However, there is one definitive difference between patients and holistic practitioners. That is that the patients have problems and the physicians have expertise. This main difference is the reason why patient, doctor relationships exist (Olsen 20-22). Any way the definition of holistic, alternative, or complementary medicine is taken, one thing is a fact: there is a difference between modern medicine and alternative medicine. Modern medicine treatments are invasive, potentially toxic, and costly; whereas complementary and alternative medicines are noninvasive, nontoxic, and usually less expensive. (Sollner et al. 873-874). Unlike modern medicine, holistic medicine places an emphasis on prevention of illness and maintenance of health as well as on the healing process. This process, however, requires a large amount of personal responsibilities. Our society has made the perception that it is okay to smoke, drink and eat too much and that our health care system will just “fix us” when something is wrong. The responsibilities that go along with alternative medicine rely solely on the person to create whole-body decisions that are not detrimental to his/her health, which is a very difficult thing for people in our society today. Another difference between modern and alternative medicine is that illness in modern medicine is considered a bad thing; however, holistic medicine physicians view illness as a chance for their patient to grow. Illness can be used in creative ways to evaluate a person’s life goals and values, and to mobilize previously untapped strengths (Flynn 9). In any newly presented idea there is bound to be differing and biased opinions; alternative health is an issue that many people have extremely strong beliefs in, or against.

Many traditional health care professionals do not recognize or give credit to alternative healing. Health professionals throughout the United States believe there are many rational differences in the quality and character of alternative medicine, and what many people who don’t believe in alternative medicine, call fringe medicine (LaPatra 37). “As of now, no scientific studies have shown that CAM (complementary and alternative medicine) alone can cure disease, but CAM can do the following: relieve symptoms and side effects of cancer and its treatment, control pain and improve comfort, relieve stress and anxiety, enhance physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being, and improve the quality of life.” However, this quote is stated by a government funded organization that probably does not want CAM to be effective because chemotherapy, radiation, and surgery financially support a large range of incomes in America (Thiboldeaux, Golant 79-81).

When taking care of a patient, these prejudice characteristics make it very difficult for doctors to cooperate with alternative healing physicians because they do not believe in one-another’s treatment systems. Alternative healers are more apt to integrate themselves within the community, where as modern medical physicians are limited in their time they can spend with each patient (usually dictated by third party payers), which in turn, affects the care they give each patient. Clearly, both types of medicine are connected and neither can offer the skills and knowledge to provide a therapy intended for a whole-body person. If cooperation between the two types of medicine, modern and alternative, were introduced it could increase the knowledge and capacity of both healers. However, it is important for physicians to realize that holistic healers understand and respect their limitations with each patient, if they feel that modern medicine is necessary for a 100% recovery, they will certainly refer the patient to a medical doctor (LaPatra 34-37).
Despite the enormous amount of time and money that goes into studying cancer, as well as antibiotics, genetics, and science we know very little about cancer, how it starts, curing it, and controlling the disease (Diamond, Cowden, and Goldberg 644-646). “The world’s most pandemic disease is not AIDS, tuberculosis, or SARS; it is cancer” (Hoffer 1). “Even when the right conventional medical treatment is used—whether its surgery, chemotherapy, or radiation, or some combination—half of all people with cancer will eventually die from their disease” (Murray 150). We have had very little success with treating cancer; and since the incidences of cancer is supposed to double by 2050, we need to find better ways of preventing, treating and curing this disease.

Currently, there are three different methods of curing cancer: surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy; none of these methods have proven to be affective or efficient. This lack of effective cancer treatments has caused some physicians to believe and expand their knowledge of alternative medicine. However, due to politics regarding health care, alternative medicine is given little or no respect, or funding (Hoffer 1). “In the United States, economic interests masquerade as therapeutic regimens and scientific concern. Their goal is to own and completely control a disease – cancer- as if it were a commodity, and to quash competition (meaning alternative approaches), so as to maintain a marketplace monopoly” (Hoffer 4). The Cancer Inc. Establishment, which includes drug companies, conventional cancer doctors, hospitals, and HMO’s, is lead by money and politics; which is why alternative medicine has been put on the back burner in research studies. Alternative medicine is much cheaper than other cancer options. For example, one lung cancer patient who goes through treatment will pay out, or their insurance will pay out, about $175,000 for one year of treatment. Over half of this payment goes toward the cost of chemotherapy drugs. The Cancer Inc. Establishment has led society to believe that alternative approaches to fighting cancer are not effective. Typical cancer treatments exist only because they pay the most; however, they are not as effective with healing, therefore, alternative medicine is slowly being introduced into society. (Diamond, Cowden, and Goldberg 644-646) “The reason alternative cancer treatments are not mainstream has little to do with alleged therapeutic ineffectiveness and far more to do with political control over the therapy marketplace” (Diamond, Cowden, and Goldberg 646). Even the Cancer Prevention Coalition reported the ineffectiveness of current cancer treatments. In a recent report they stated:

“With the growing trend towards pluralism and dialogue, major changes are developing in the understanding and practice of health care. The key is the emergence of integrated and holistic medicine, which poses a powerful challenge to conventional modern high-tech medical practice in industrialized nations, apart from providing low cost care in lesser-developed countries. Not surprisingly, it is estimated that some 40% of all Americans are now making many million more visits to integrated and holistic health care providers than to primary care physicians… Integrated and holistic practitioners, institutions, and organizations should be mobilized to play a lead role in the STOP CANCER Campaign, and one which could attract larger grass roots support than any other group” (Hoffer 1-4)
We can never get away from our health, even when we sleep. “Health is very personal. It has to be because it is about our bodies—the beings we are 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, for our entire lives; it is not just a part of us—it is us.” (Olsen xiii-xv) “The journey to wellness is not a straight line. Along the way, there may be some stalls, jumps ahead, or even some u-turns. However, the sum total of all levels of experience adds up to a spiraling, one-way or the other. The choice of which direction to take is the patients. You make that choice by choosing to change” (Olsen 33). Olsen describes this change into holistic and alternative medicine as a spiral affect. “The image of the spiral appears over and over again in nature, art, and mythology…reminding us of the expansive patterns in life” (Olsen 33). For example a shell represents the different outward spiral of growth through life. “The spiral is a universal form that symbolizes dynamic motion around a fixed point. Spirals can descend in decreasing space, ascend in ever-expanding reach, or proceed along a continuum in an even, cylindrical way…So can the healing journey. This describes a movement through changes in life and health. For me it symbolizes a rhythm, a pulse of life as I progress through chronological time and the evolution of my health. I move between focusing on different issues, different parts of my health, and different phases of wellness” (Olsen 31). The characteristics of a healthy individual may vary; however, it is important to understand how alternative medicine can work with, or against modern medicine.

Alternative medicine can be implemented in any health care system. However, alternative medicine, when used to cure cancer, is typically used on its own, apart from any toxic chemicals, such as chemotherapy and radiation or other drugs that are used in modern medicine. Studies have shown that patients experiencing a longer duration and progression of cancer tend to use alternative medicine more often than patients whose cancer is localized. Also, high income, educated patients, as well as younger females, use more alternative medicine. Studies have also shown a direct relationship between alternative medicine and distress. The author regards CAM (complementary and alternative medicine) as a “marker for distress” and explains how it may enable physicians to acknowledge a patient struggling with fear and stress of cancer at an earlier stage, allowing the doctor to refer the stressed patient to a psychological support team. There have been numerous studies on whether patients who chose to use CAM to fight their cancer also use, in conglomeration with CAM, modern medicine. Studies have shown an array of results, ranging from 5%-40% of patients that use CAM in place of modern medicine, instead of in conglomeration with modern medicine (Sollner et al. 873-874).

Modern cancer treatments can actually increase the chances for new cancers to form, whereas natural medicine eliminates this deadly side affect (Murray 142). A study was conducted to investigate the use of different CAM methods. The study was conducted on 172 different cancer patients, with a wide range of cancer in the Innsbruck University Radio-Oncology Department. Forty-two of the 172 patients reported using CAM, which primarily consisted the intake of multivitamins, herbs, and homeopathy, as well as spiritual therapies. This particular study found that more women than men used CAM, recurrent cancer patients used more CAM, and patients with metastases cancer used more CAM than patients whose cancer was localized. This study also found that stress, depression, and anxiety were not linked to CAM in any way (Sollner et al. 874-877).

There are a few important strategies of using natural medicine while curing cancer or in support and conglomeration with chemo or radiation. First, it is important to support immune function; a healthy immune system is better able to recognize cancer cells as abnormal and
destroy them, before they produce tumors. Secondly, it is important to inhibit tumor growth. Lothar Hirneise, author of the book ‘Chemo Cures Cancer…and the Earth is Flat’, has traveled the world in search of successful methods of treating cancer. He is a cancer specialist who never studied medicine, but believes anyone can find a solution to cancer. Hirneise explains that a tumor is the body’s solution to a problem. A tumor forms because someone is no longer producing adrenaline, which is needed to break down sugar. An excess of sugar is dangerous, so the body produces tumors. Tumors ferment sugar. They also use a lot of energy due to the fast division of cells. That’s why some tumors grow so fast. Cancer cells function like liver cells, only much more efficiently. So the tumor helps you to rid your body of poisons. Without the tumor forming, the patient would be extremely ill. Hirneise always tells people: “The tumor is not your problem. A tumor is an incredibly ingenious solution on the part of the body” (Hirneise 1). When you get healthy, the tumor disappears on its own, which is why you shouldn’t immediately operate to remove it. His advice is to detoxify. If the tumor continues to grow, which is almost never the case; a physician can always operate later. For example, too much sugar in the cells causes blindness, as is the case with diabetics; therefore the creation of the tumor is a solution, it is the beginning of the treatments process because it is the first sign of cancer in the body (Hirneise 1). Tumor cells are abnormal because they do not respond to signals that regulate their growth, the way healthy cells do. Many natural compounds partially restore cell responsiveness, thereby slowing the uncontrolled growth of a tumor. Supporting normal cell differentiation by using natural medicines is also a key strategy. Next, promote programmed cell death. “By restoring the normal function of important cellular regulators, we can enhance the cell’s natural ability to destroy itself if it becomes damaged or cancerous” (Murray 143). Inhibiting the spread of cancer by preventing spreading is important because then the cancer is localized and easier for the body to fight. Also, it is important to inhibit the formation of new blood vessels. Tumors can only grow if there are blood vessels supporting them; therefore, anti-angiogenics are used to “starve the vessels that feed the tumor” (Murray 143). Lastly, it is vital to reduce the likelihood of recurrence or future mutations. Unlike modern cancer treatments that can actually inhibit new cancers to form, natural medicine eliminates this deadly side affect (Murray 142-143).

There are many aspects that affect the use of alternative medicine and its ability to cure cancer, with or without the use of modern medicine. “Doctors tell patients that once the tumor is gone, they’re healthy. That is not only untrue, it is stupid” (Hirneise 3). Hirneise reports having numerous friends that are doctors tell him they would never use chemotherapy on themselves or loved ones. Why do doctors treat their patients with chemotherapy? “Because doctors have a lot to lose if he/she turns their back on the system…If I ask doctors for examples of patients that have been cured thanks to their treatment, they become silent. On the other hand, I can cite thousands of patients and cases that got better even though those same doctors gave up on them. I know them; I shake their hands every day” (Hirneise 3).

Alternative medicine is currently being studied and practiced more frequently as a way of preventing, treating, and curing cancer. It acts as an aid, or can be used solely for curing cancer. Detoxification, a specific diet and nutrition system, spirituality, and therapies including water, energy, heat and massage therapies, are among the most effective treatments for curing cancer.

Most holism patients seek out care that is directly related to their illness or problem, physically, mentally, or emotionally. Olsen breaks these different types of treatments into six different categories. The first group is of the physical healing arts, Touch and Relaxation. It
includes massage, reflexology, Rosen Method, trager, and Acupressure. These techniques offer experience in relaxing, nurturing and energizing using a gentle manipulation of the muscles or soft tissue. Manipulation and Restructuring is the second category. The goal in this group is to correct structural, postural, and balance problems. Chiropractic, Physical therapy and myotherapy to name a few are used to create a relationship between body parts, focusing on muscles, joints, or bone alignment. The third group is Energetic Balance which is considered to be acupuncture, flower essences, homeopathy, reflexology, and therapeutic touch. “These methods of physical healing recognize the subtle energy interactions between aspects of the client, and between the client, environment, and practitioner” (Olsen 35). Movement and Exercise is the fourth category of Olsen’s six types of treatments. This category includes yoga, martial arts, and any type of exercise or movement. It is important to stay physically fit and integrate regular exercise into a patient’s daily routine; it is something that can be accomplished easily through classes or self-care practices. Biochemistry is the fifth category. It incorporates the use of food, herbs, and essences in everyday life to create better living through natural chemistry. This can include aromatherapy, herbal medicine, nutrition, and traditional Chinese Medicine. The sixth group is related to mind-healing, instead of physical healing. These strategies can range from biofeedback to relaxation techniques. “They use psycho-emotional effects; emphasize a learning process, and/or aim to reeducate the brain” (Olsen 35-38).

No one therapy or diet can completely cure cancer; it depends solely on the individual, his/her needs, and severity of the cancer. Detoxifying and getting toxins out of the body, plays a vital role in curing cancer. “One of the most essential practices in any cancer-reversal program, and for prevention, too, is to detoxify the body, down to the level of its cells, of a myriad of toxins, chemicals, parasites, and foreign substances, and to open up clogged elimination channels to move them out of the body” (Diamond, Cowden, and Goldberg 948). In recent decades, people have been exposed to many more chemicals than previous generations. For example, over 70 million Americans live in areas that exceed smog standards; most municipal drinking water contains over 700 chemicals, including excessive amounts of lead; over 3,000 chemicals are added to the food supply, and as many as 10,000 chemicals in the form of solvents, emulsifiers, and preservatives are used in food processing and storage, which can remain in the body for years. Detoxification can rid the body of these poisons. Leon Chaitow, N.D., D.O., of London England states “a body with a healthy immune system, efficient organs of eliminating and detoxification, and a sound circulatory and nervous system can handle a great deal of toxicity” (Diamond, Cowden, and Goldberg 950). However, if a person’s immune system has been damaged from chronic exposure to environmental pollutants, restoring these functions, organs and systems can be accomplished only through detoxification. Therapies used in this process can include: fasting, chelation, and nutritional, herbal, and homeopathic methods; all of which accelerate the body’s own natural cleansing processes (Diamond, Cowden, and Goldberg 948-950).

A specific diet is one of the many different alternative medicines considered to be effective in curing cancer. Unlike traditional treatment, orthomolecular medicine or a specific diet and nutrition are inexpensive and freely available (Hoffer 4). “Diet and nutrition are both at the core of cancer etiology and its successful treatment against cancer” (Diamond, Cowden, and Goldberg 750). A health index eating study revealed that 88% of Americans do not get their necessary nutrients; more than 80% eat too much saturated fat and too little fruits, vegetables, and fiber-rich grains. Nutrients in our body work as a team to fight against unwanted disease.
When our bodies do not obtain enough nutrients, they become more vulnerable to disease and malfunction. “Vitamins and minerals in effect “drive” the biochemical and electrical circuitry of the body. The body’s functioning is therefore profoundly affected by how nutrients either work together or against each other” (Diamond, Cowden, and Goldberg 752). Specific nutrients can help people eliminate threatening lifestyles such as environmental, and emotional or psychological factors. For example, someone undergoing cancer treatment will need high levels of zinc whereas a person encountering heavy emotional stress will need high levels of B vitamins. A whole foods diet promotes health by decreasing fat and sugar intake and by increasing the consumption of fiber and nutrients, particularly the numerous antioxidants and other phytochemicals that have been identified as beneficial anticancer nutrients. A few of the nutrients needed for reversing cancer, through means of changing diet include: vitamins B6, C, E, folic acid, calcium, zinc, and garlic (Diamond, Cowden, and Goldberg 750-756).

This specific diet and nutrition is called Orthomolecular medicine; it is “the practice of preventing and treating biochemical abnormalities, and treating their resulting diseases, through supplementation with optimal amounts of vitamins, amino acids, and other substances that are found naturally throughout the body” (Hoffer 4). Dr. Murray suggests his “Super-Eight Natural Medicines” for the treatment of cancer, to work alongside chemotherapy or other medicinal medicine. All of the medicines he suggests are found in the drug chemotherapy; however, the overall substance of chemotherapy is toxic, these medicines, when used naturally are effective and non-toxic. The Super-Eight are: proteolytic enzymes, curcumin, quercetin, maitake D or MD-fraction, PSK/PSP, polyerga, modified citrus pectin, and Ip6. Dr. Murray suggests that most patients will not need to take all of these medicines in order to cure their cancer, in fact curcumin and quercetin are rarely used together in the fight against cancer. Proteolytic enzymes are various enzymes that digest protein and have been suggested for the fight against cancer since 1906 when John Beard reported evidence of this in his study. These special enzymes have a number of valuable anticancer effects; they “increase the manufacture of cancer-blocking antiproteases, inhibit angiogenesis and metastasis, enhance the immune response, and promote differentiation of cancer cells” (Murray 171). Curcumin, the main ingredient in curry has demonstrated significant anti-inflammatory and anticancer affects. This natural medicine has shown researchers that is helps fight against cancer, at any stage of the disease: initiation, promotion, and progression. This medicine inhibits the formation of cancer-causing nitrosamines, enhances the body’s production of cancer-fighting compounds, such as glutathione, and promotes the liver’s proper detoxification of cancer-causing compounds. Curcumin also shows evidence of causing cancer to regress. Quercetin works by inhibiting a family of enzymes known as tyrosine kinases that enables the cancer cell to split and become inactive. Maitake D-fraction and MD-fraction consist of complex sugar compounds and protein. The primary mechanisms that make these compounds effective, in fighting cancer, are that they protect healthy cells from becoming cancerous, enhance the immune system, and ability to identify and destroy cancer cells, and help the cell regain control of programmed cell death; therefore, they help to prevent the spread of cancer. PSK/PSP are related protein-bound compounds from a mushroom. These are the leading products used by cancer patients in Japan and China. Polyerga is “a highly purified extract of peptides (small proteins) obtained from the spleens of pigs” (Murray 180). This medicine can help prevent some of the side effects of chemotherapy, enhance the effectiveness of conventional chemotherapy and radiation treatment, prevent metastasis, and increase both the quality of life and the survival time of cancer patients. Modified citrus pectin is a complex sugar obtained from the peep and pulp of citrus fruits. This
complex sugar reduces the risk of metastasis and the spread of cancerous cells. Ip6 is found in the fiber from whole grains and legumes (Murray 171). “It is used to boost the immune system and is also helpful in stimulating the activity of white blood cells known as natural killer cells which literally kill cancer cells, ciruses, and other infecting organisms” (Murray 185).

Herbal medicine is the science of using plants medicinally and incorporating their natural effects into a cancer patient’s specific diet and nutrition system. Herbs, or botanicals, contain a large number of naturally occurring chemicals that have biological activity. Herbal treatment affects a human’s physiology. “In the case of cancer, botanical agents work by stimulating DNA-repairing mechanisms, producing antioxidant effects, promoting induction of protective enzymes, inhibiting cancer-activation enzymes, and inducing oxygenating effects” (Diamond, Cowden, and Goldberg 798). Most medicinal treatments are naturally found in plants. An estimated 250,000 to 500,000 plants currently exist; however, only about 5,000 have been studied extensively for their medicinal purposes. Because politics and money play such a large role in drug studies, or lack thereof, when considering alternative medicine, scientists lack the funds to study these plants in hopes of finding a new medicine that might cure cancer, and many other diseases. Aloe vera, mint and bromelain from pineapple are among the many herbs that can be used to fight against cancer (Diamond, Cowden, and Goldberg 795-801).

Everyone, whether they participate in religious tradition or not, has a spiritual aspect to themselves. “We can spend lifetimes spinning stories about our boss being a jerk, what new car we want to buy next, how much money we’re making, or how irritated we are with our mates and family, and about how right we are in all of those scenarios. What does all of that spinning do for us? We get dizzy and confused, never seeing the real truth, which is that we spend so much time looking outward; we fail to find the real treasure only found by looking within. Whether we’re already on some kind of journey or spiritual path, just beginning, or haven’t sought the pathway just yet, cancer doesn’t leave much choice but to look within” (Thiboldeaux, Golant 79-81).

We all hold personal beliefs about life, its value and its meaning. Medical professionals are beginning to make strong connections between spirituality and medical treatment. Through scientific research, scientists have discovered something that many people may have previously thought: “the human mind has a profound influence on one’s state of health” (Murray 187). Especially, it has been found, that our moods and attitudes directly affect the ability of our immune system to function properly (Murray 188). Dr Andrew Weil, M.D. and author and founder of the Center for Integrative Medicine, writes: “It’s obvious to me that grief and depression impair resistance and health in general, so I would not be surprised to learn that mental and spiritual imbalances make people more susceptible to cancer. Working to improve mental/spiritual health...cannot fail to bolster defenses against all kind of disease, including cancer” (Thiboldeaux, Golant 80). Researchers now believe that simple meditation sessions, listening to music, yoga classes, religious services, and surrounding oneself with nature can not only increase a person’s attitude towards life and their deathly disease, but also increase the odds of success in fighting the cancer. “Saying is believing”, which is why researchers have come to this conclusion (Thiboldeaux, Golant 79-81). “Cancer has led me to where my ego would never have wished to go because I was too afraid...and cancer has shown my soul exactly where I
needed to be to find my depth and face my fears honestly”…quote from Rebecca L. Tyrrell cancer patient who realized the healing power of faith (Thiboldeaux, Golant 79-81).

Many therapies including manipulative and body-based systems, as well as water and energy therapies have been proven to help in the fight against and cure of cancer. Theses typical treatment options are meant to be used in conglomeration with other alternative medicine, such as detoxification and a specific diet and change in nutrition. It is expected that these therapies are best used as a treatment option when spirituality plays a significant role in the patients fight against cancer.

Manipulative therapies are “based on physical manipulation and or movement of one or more parts of the body” (Thiboldeaux, Golant 82). It can include chiropractic or osteopathic manipulation, and massage. However the downside to this therapy can be if a patient has bone metastases; they should be aware that these systems can be dangerous and should be avoided. Energy Therapy is based on a theory that there are energy fields around the human body. It is believed that by changing the energy fields by manual manipulation, such as QiGong or healing touch, diseases can be eliminated (Thiboldeaux, Golant 86). Two types of energy therapies are biofield therapies, which are meant to influence energy fields that theoretically surround and penetrate the body. The second type is bioelectromagnetic-based therapies, which involve using electromagnetic fields. Examples include pulsed fields, magnetic fields, or alternating current/direct current fields (Thiboldeaux, Golant 81-86).

Water can stimulate the immune system, help increase the body’s white blood cell count, aid the body in purging itself of accumulated toxins, and produce a state of general relaxation essential to the healing process; therefore therapeutic use of water can be a great benefit to cancer patients. Water therapy, also known as hydrotherapy, is “the use of water, vapor, ice, steam, and water at hot or cold temperatures to maintain and restore health” (Diamond, Cowden, and Goldberg 989). Methods such as saunas, hot or cold baths, mud baths, steam rooms, and mineral tubs help stimulate the immune system and help increase the body’s white blood cell count (Diamond, Cowden, and Goldberg 989-990).

Cancer cells are vulnerable to high temperatures; therefore, heat therapy, or hyperthermia is vital when treating cancer. This simple treatment method can even eliminate the need for radiation therapy. Dr. Atkins states “thanks to hyperthermia, we can shrink tumors with far less radiation today to get the same therapeutic outcome in cancer patients, and our patients’ immune systems and overall health are faring much better as a result” (as qtd. in Diamond, Cowden, and Goldberg 996). Heat therapy was also recently approved in the U.S. for treating breast cancer recurrence, and is even covered by some health insurances (Diamond, Cowden, and Goldberg 996-997).

A variety of physically-oriented techniques can help a person deeply relax, stimulate blood and lymphatic circulation, enable the activity of the body’s anticancer defenses, even clear emotions and attitudes “trapped” in the tissues (Diamond, Cowden, and Goldberg 1000). “It is essential to involve the physical body and its musculoskeletal system in the cancer-reversal process” (Diamond, Cowden, and Goldberg 1000). Hands on therapies such as massage, deep tissue manipulation, movement awareness, and energy balancing, among others, which are variously employed to soothe injured muscles, stimulate blood and lymphatic circulation, reduce pain, and promote deep relaxation, as well as improve the structure and physical functioning of
the body. For example, lymphatic massage can move metabolic waste through the body to promote a rapid recovery from illness or disease.

Incorporated in the use of manipulative massage therapy is the use of exercise of the muscles. The benefit of exercise extends far beyond cardiovascular fitness and the prevention of obesity and heart disease. Exercise aids in detoxification, digestion, weight control, and immune processes. In modern medical cancer treatments, patients typically spend hours lying in a hospital bed. Alternative medicine allows the cancer patient to engage in regular exercise or physical activity. Exercise has many affects when fighting against cancer. Aerobic activities increase oxygen supply to tissues; because cancer tends to flourish in an oxygen-poor environment, the well-exercised body is more likely to repel cancer cells. Secondly, any form of physical activity, because it involves muscle contractions, stimulates the lymphatic system, which filters toxins from the blood and supports the body’s immune system. Exercise can also stimulate the activity of natural killer cells and other components of the body’s anticancer defenses. Lastly, exercise causes an elevation of body temperature and increases the production of pyrogen, a special substance that enhances the function of white blood cells. (Diamond, Cowden, and Goldberg 1000-1002).

The United States, along with many other countries across the world are having little or no success in treating cancer. Cancer cases are rising each year; “this year 1.4 million Americans will be diagnosed with cancer” (Thiboldeaux, Golant 13). Being diagnosed with cancer is a challenging experience, on many levels, no matter who the victim. Being a daughter and granddaughter of cancer victims I somewhat understand the hardship the individual goes through, as well as his/her support system, family, and friends. While cancer can be a death defying natural effect, and victimize the people we don’t think “deserve it”; people can overcome cancer, and in doing so, become closer to their families and people that matter the most to them. Alternative medicine focuses on just that, the idea that a person can better themselves and the people around them if they incorporate alternative medicine into their cancer treatment. The success of alternative medicine when treating and curing cancer is beginning to be widely known, however, there are many obstacles that stand in the way before this system of treatment will be considered in America.

The idea that the United States government is not willing to support the fight against cancer, by using alternative medicine, is degrading and humiliating. The statistics support alternative medicine as being far more successful and effective than modern medicine. Alternative medicine may not be as effective when used solely as a means of treating cancer; however, it should be incorporated into modern medicine, in a way, that makes both systems as effective as possible. “Complete treatment of cancer requires approaches from many directions. Conventional strategies, in combination with natural medicines, provide the body with the physical tools it needs to defeat the disease” (Murray 187). If the United States does not stand against the political aspects of funding and exploring new ways of treating cancer, statistics of people who are diagnosed and die from this disease will only increase over time. It is not until we spread the word of success, alternative medicine has on cancer patients, that the government and doctors alike, will begin to incorporate alternative medicines into the treatment and prevention of cancer, for the benefit of the American people.
Bibliography


LaPatra explains the revolution of holistic medicine, how it began, the history of alternative medicine, the difference between modern medicine and alternative medicine as well as what he believes the future of holistic medicine will be. It was written in the seventies which creates an entire different perspective of holistic medicine and how it is viewed today. However, it was a very advanced book for its time and definitely relates to my topic as if it were written within the last few years.

“Healing” is intended for everyone interested in the different biases of alternative medicine, it is medical information, but written in a way for all to comprehend. It gives examples of how it exists in societies and how doctors and alternative medical physicians are hesitant to work together; also, how complete our healthcare would be if these different medical physicians would work together.


Olsen begins by describing the new paradigm shit in society regarding our health care systems. In this book she quotes, “Finally, our society is realizing that we need to treat the whole person, not the disease. Health is very personal. It has to be because it is about our bodies-the beings we are 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, for our entire lives. We can never get away from our health, even when we sleep. It is not just a part of us-it is us.” This quote explains her perception of holistic health care and how important it is for people. She describes, in detail, the five different stages of creating a healthy, holistic relationship with practitioners. She also breaks down the different therapies, physical and emotional, in to six categories that are used in holistic medicine.

This book is used to give a new health care approach the credit it deserves. It explains in depth the process and how the average person would go forward in being holistic and “whole-body”. This book is a great source because it is neutral on the topic of holism, not bias in anyway and a great source for pinpointing optional therapies for different diseases and illnesses, including cancer.


Flynn digs into the meaning holistic and holism which is derived from the Greek word, holos, meaning whole. The book explains, for example, that a person is more than a nervous system, cardiovascular system, mind, flesh, etc…Therefore, the body can’t be cured by just focusing on one of these aspects. Holistic medicine focuses on each aspect, which is why, Flynn states, it is effective in the curing and preventing of diseases.
This book is meant to give a brief history and origin of where holistic medicine came to be and how it has formed in society. It gives a great explanation of the broad idea of holistic medicine and having a whole-body mindset. However, it does not give much other new information that I didn’t already research. Yet, the definition and explanation of the holistic approach as an effective mean of treating diseases is great and goes into much detail.


The three doctors that wrote this book have outlined, and given specific examples for numerous alternative treatments for cancer. They also state the bias and politics related to introducing an alternative health care system to treating cancer that is significantly less expensive for society. The book continues with different types of alternative medicine and how the average person would follow their recommended regimen to fight against cancer. There are 23 doctors who have contributed to the book with their own success stories of using alternative medicine on his/her own cancer patients.

The book is written in a perspective of doctors but for people who are interested in alternative medicines. There are many statements that led me to believe that these doctors show some resilience to the political side of health systems. However, they have given specific reasons why they have come up with such research and believe so strongly in alternative medicine. This is a great source for my paper because it’s packed with information about different treatment options as well as real-life success stories regarding alternative medicine.


Golant and Thiboldeaux have laid out a plan of action for cancer patients. In their book, they discuss every option that a cancer patient can look into, from chemotherapy to acupuncture; it gives details about each different type of therapy. Most important, the book explains the success a cancer patient can have if alternative medicine is used along-side alternative medicine. This is also the first book that goes into detail about how faith and spirituality can help in the curing of cancer.

This book is designed for a person and his/her family that is going through the cancer process, from diagnosis to conclusion, whether it being success in curing the disease, or death; this book explains each option. It also explains a clear route to designing a curing system that is best for each patient. The book gives contacts and references for people going through cancer and is very factual. It is neutral and not bias in any way towards modern medicine or towards alternative, complementary medicine.

Hoffer explains the relationship between cancer treatments and its effectiveness to cure cancer. He is somewhat bias about this topic; however, his research shows great reason for this bias. He has studied, since 1955, orthomolecular medicine which is based on overloading the body with natural vitamins and amino acids. His guide also gives a great example of what the Cancer Prevention Coalition’s view is about current, modern cancer treatments; they have began to realize and express how modern cancer treatments are lacking effectiveness.

This guide is meant to be read by the average person and/or anyone who want to an alternative to preventing and controlling cancer. It is a bias book; but based on the research I am convinced that their studies prove to be effective and the only reason they are not well-known in society is because of the politics associated in the medical field with expensive drugs and treatments, because orthomolecular medicine is very inexpensive and widely available.


Murray is a doctor experienced in the use of natural medicines. He explains, in depth specific diets for different types of cancer, as well as detailed guidelines for using natural medicines in any fight against cancer. He gives eight specific medicines that he and others have proven to help in the fight and cure of cancer. His book has been backed by scientific research studies. This book also gives detailed examples of which natural medicines to use following the modern cancer treatments such as surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy.

This book has been written to get the word out about natural medicines and how effective they can be against fighting cancer. Someone diagnosed with cancer should read this book, because it explains the different options associated with different health care systems as well as the control and treatment of cancer. This book is neutral and honest, describing that know way of cancer has proved to be more effective than another, but using modern and alternative medicine together is the most effective way of curing cancer to date.


This study discusses the difference between alternative and modern medicine and then describes, in detail, the relationship between defeating cancer and alternative medicine. It gives specific research and data based on their own findings as well as findings of previous alternative medicine studies. The article and study explains how patients with more acute, progressive cancer are more apt to use CAM (complementary and alternative medicine) than patients whose cancer is localized. The study shows the popularity of different alternative treatments, including the intake of multivitamins, herbs, and homeopathy as well as spiritual therapies.
The article and study is used to give specific, researched examples of the use of CAM in cancer patients. Its lingo is difficult to understand at times; however, it was very helpful to get specific examples of how CAM directly affects patient’s recovery as well as specific cases of who is more apt to use CAM to cure their cancer. There are charts and diagrams that conglomerate with the research within this study that will be helpful.


Lothar Hirneise is a German man who never studied medicine until his friend was diagnosed with cancer. After this he became active in the medical world attending conferences on alternative methods of treating cancer and eventually became an expert in the field. In this interview he describes his passion against conventional, modern medicine as well as for alternative medicine. He explains how tumors are “the solution to the problem” because they show that something else in the body is not functioning properly; therefore it’s a warning to fix the immune system and to detoxify the body.

This article gives specific examples of patients he has personally treated as well as quotes from conventional doctors he has met that explain how they don’t believe chemotherapy cures cancer either. Hirneise is definitely biased throughout the article, bashing conventional medicine in many different ways and strongly believing it doesn’t work for anyone. However, he has represented good evidence that alternative medicine is more effective than conventional, which is why this source will be helpful when writing my paper.


Dr. Lam.com has created a conglomeration of statistics that are in favor of using alternative medicine when treating cancer. The website gives hard facts including the following: “Patients with Stages 3a melanoma who underwent Gerson therapy had a 5-year survival rate of 82 percent versus 39 percent in conventional therapy. For stage 3b, the survival rate was 70 percent versus 41 percent in conventional therapy. In stage 4a, the rate was 39 percent as compared to 6 percent”. These statistics are astonishing and while they may be surprising, the doctors on the website have great evidence behind these numbers.

The statistics on this website are meant for everyone and anyone who is interested in alternative and holistic treatment options for cancer. The information on this site is monumental and surprisingly unbiased. It is written from a doctor’s point of view which is supposed to be unbiased; Dr. Lam.com does not sway to either side of the argument, he simply states the facts.

This website offers a wide variety of information on different holistic healing methods, products, and information about alternative health, focusing primarily on the nutrition, detoxification, and changes in daily lifestyles. The information throughout the site is effective because it not biased and is based on real-life experiences. However, this site does recognize the fact that holistic medicine cannot cure every issue regarding cancer; therefore, modern, western medicine must be implemented into the alternative medical system as well.

This site was created by a conglomeration of doctors and people who have studied holistic medicine, in Europe; which means they may have a more open mind about this system of healing cancer. The “Healing Cancer Naturally” website will contribute to my paper because it offers information that is reliable and legitimate.


This website explains the difference between medical systems and they way they used to operate compared to how they are today. “Many physicians no longer treat the whole person, but are medical experts in one specific body system.” The site continues to explain the importance of treating the entire body instead of just an aspect when something in the body isn’t functioning correctly. Interestingly, this website focuses a great deal on chiropractics, which is something that is not typically focused on in other holistic information.

The information throughout the website is liable and unbiased. The statistics and facts are based on personal experience that has occurred in the New England Holistic Health Center since it was established over 20 years ago. This site is helpful because it gives a information that is based on an actual clinic. While this site will be relevant in my paper, it will be more helpful when designing my cancer rehabilitation center.