

About Integrative Medicine

A GUIDE TO SELF-CARE AND SUPPORT | SPRING 2017



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The Art of Caring

Welcome to “The Art of Caring” issue of *About Integrative Medicine*. At MSK, we understand that the best medicine combines science and art. To practice the art of caring is to actively engage with one another to better understand how to provide compassionate, personalized support throughout the cancer experience.

Whether you are a patient looking for effective self-care techniques, a healthcare provider, or a family member caring for a loved one, our service offers integrative medicine therapies to nurture your mind, body, and spirit.

Read on to explore how our music and dance therapists help some of MSK’s youngest patients tap into their creative talent. Learn about an exciting collaboration with the Supportive Care Service to provide integrative medicine to those hospitalized patients with the greatest symptom needs. Finally, discover how we are empowering chemotherapy patients to use handheld technology for self-care in the waiting room.

Enjoy this issue!

Creative Arts Therapies Help Children and Families Cope with Cancer

By Christina Seluzicki

Nadia (pseudonym), a 14-year-old with osteosarcoma, wanted to learn to play the piano for her niece. During a long hospitalization, she was able to weave her love of music into her cancer treatment and rehabilitation to help her achieve this goal. Nadia engaged in therapeutic music lessons through the Integrative Medicine Service’s (IMS) Music Therapy Program, a creative arts therapy service that MSK has offered to infants, children, young adults, and their families since 1999. Under the guidance of her music therapist, Nadia focused on the keyboard and



Music Therapist Karen Popkin with a patient.

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Integrative Medicine and Supportive Care Services Partner to Improve Inpatient Care

By Coby Basal

Collaboration is key for providing exceptional cancer care and improving patient outcomes, both in and out of the hospital. Over the past year, Jonathan Siman, one of our on-staff acupuncturists, has become a regular member of the inpatient care team in the Palliative Medicine Service (now known as the Supportive Care Service), rounding with the department’s attending physicians and advising them on referrals. The goal of this collaborative effort was to discover if providing dedicated staff time on another service’s rounds would increase inpatient usage and improve ordering behaviors. We also hoped to improve patient symptom management, educate clinicians about integrative medicine, and reduce patient barriers to accessing IMS services.

Our results have been promising. Jonathan’s presence during rounds led to a substantial increase in inpatient orders for IMS therapies placed by Supportive Care providers, from 11 orders in the year prior to his participation to 214 in the following year. Such a significant increase demonstrates that this type of collaboration can greatly improve patient access to integrative medicine and communication across teams. Kimberly Chow, Nurse Practitioner Coordinator and Clinical Program Manager for the Supportive Care Service, said,

“Having an integrative medicine specialist round with our team has truly enhanced the collaboration between our two services. Jonathan’s direct input on ways to improve our patients’ symptoms through mind-body work, music therapy, and other integrative approaches not only enriches the interdisciplinary discussion but elevates the care we provide to patients and their families.”

As Jonathan continues his work in partnership with Supportive Care, IMS is exploring how to best utilize this experience to create a template for program collaboration with additional disease management teams within the hospital. ■



Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

Empowering Patients in the Waiting Room to Improve Symptoms with Self-Care Videos

By Janice DeRito and Jamie Green

Many patients struggle with pain, nausea, anxiety, and stress before their chemotherapy appointments, and lengthy waiting times in the clinic can make the discomfort worse.

Researchers in IMS recently conducted a study to improve the patient experience by offering interactive videos right in the waiting room setting, when patients may need extra support.



Patients practiced acupressure using an iPad app.

Using a mobile video app, we gave patients iPads and asked them to rate their level of pain, nausea, stress, and anxiety. By following demonstrations taught by our clinicians, patients learned four acupressure points and a guided meditation, or watched a control video. The results showed that of the patients who completed the treatment videos, 93% reported the experience was helpful, 94% agreed the videos helped them pass the time, and

76% wanted the option to watch self-care videos while waiting for appointments. We also learned that a patient's symptom burden could be improved in real time simply by learning a self-care technique. On average, we observed a 46% decrease in stress, a 45% reduction in anxiety, and a 19% decrease in pain.

Dr. Ting Bao, lead researcher, says, "This important project shows that integrative approaches delivered via a handheld device help our cancer patients in the waiting room. Our team included over 15 people in our service and has been a perfect collaboration among our clinical care, education, and research teams." Such promising results suggest that MSK patients not only value access to self-care education, but also that these tools can improve health outcomes. We plan to expand our library of self-guided care videos in the coming year to ensure that our patients can continue to benefit from this important resource. ■

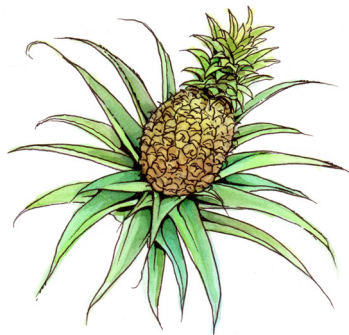
This spring, Dr. Bao's project team won second place in the People's Choice award category at the annual MSK Quality Improvement fair.

ABOUT HERBS FEATURE OF THE MONTH Bromelain

Bromelain, derived from the fruit and stem of pineapple, is a proteolytic enzyme. It is used to treat burns and skin conditions, and as an anti-inflammatory. Proteolytic enzymes, popularized during the 1960s in Germany, are employed in the treatment of osteoarthritis, autoimmune diseases, and viral infections. They have also been used as adjuvants to cancer treatments.

In laboratory tests, bromelain demonstrated anti-inflammatory and wound-healing properties, and eliminated preformed blood clots. Clinical studies indicate that it is effective in alleviating pain and inflammation. When used topically, bromelain can help remove dead or infected skin tissue from burns. Preliminary findings suggest the utility of bromelain in controlling symptoms associated with cancer treatments. Confirmatory data are needed.

Bromelain is available in health food stores and online in the form of tablets and capsules for oral use, and in topical formulations. It is also marketed as a "digestive aid." ■



Bromelain comes from the pineapple stem.

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Creative Arts Therapies

practiced proper body alignment to strengthen and improve her posture. She was delighted to present her new skills in a personal concert for her niece, along with other family members, featuring an original keyboard piece she wrote from her hospital bed.

In addition to our work with adult patients and their families, IMS has dedicated teams of creative arts therapy professionals who work extensively with MSK's pediatric populations. These clinicians collaborate with other MSK staff, including child life specialists, doctors, nurses, and psychiatry and social work departments, to bring healing to our youngest patients by helping them express their feelings, explore creative ideas, and manage pain through music and movement.

Dr. Suzi Tortora oversees the Dance Therapy program, a creative arts program for children at MSK. In 2003, she designed and implemented a multisensory dance/movement psychotherapy treatment, which emphasizes the role of the body and multisensory experience — such as play, breath awareness, and touch — to support physiologic and psychological coping, specifically related to pain management. It is, says Tortora, an "embodied analgesic" supporting the patient to engage, soothe, and empower a sense of self and coping.

Karen Popkin, Program Coordinator for Creative Arts and Movement Therapies, says of the creative arts pediatric programs, "I find it deeply gratifying to witness a young person find inner strength through a passion to create. This is why we are here." ■

Bendheim Integrative Medicine Center

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Appointments: 646-888-0800

www.mskcc.org/integrativemedicine

Integrative Medicine offers classes and self-care videos on yoga, tai chi, qigong, and meditation to help you discover the practice that is right for you. For a copy of our current class schedule and links to our video library, go to our website.