

# Complementary, alternative medicine use high in cancer patients

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(HealthDay)—One-third of patients with cancer and cancer survivors

report using complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), and many do not disclose use to physicians, according to a research letter published online April 11 in *JAMA Oncology*.

Nina N. Sanford, M.D., from the University of Texas Southwestern in Dallas, and colleagues used data from the National Health Interview Survey to estimate the proportion of patients with [cancer](#) and cancer survivors using CAM and the associated rates of nondisclosure.

The researchers found that 1,023 (33.3 percent) of the 3,118 participants reporting a history of cancer used CAM in the previous 12 months. Herbal supplements were the most commonly used CAM modality (35.8 percent). White race, female sex, non-Hispanic ethnicity, and younger age correlated with CAM use (adjusted odds ratios, 1.82, 1.55, 1.64, and 1.02, respectively, per year). Overall, 29.3 percent of CAM users did not disclose use to their physician; the adjusted rates of nondisclosure were 11.8 and 58.2 percent for those using herbal supplements and mantra/mindfulness/spiritual meditation, respectively. The most common reasons for nondisclosure were because the physician did not ask or because participants did not think the [physician](#) needed to know (57.4 and 47.4 percent, respectively).

"Given the high proportion of patients with cancer and cancer survivors reporting use of CAM in this nationally [representative sample](#), the potential implications of CAM use on oncologic outcomes merits further study," the authors write.

One author disclosed financial ties to Varian Medical Systems.

**More information:** [Abstract/Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)



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