

Oncologists underestimate patient use of complementary medicine

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Oncologists may substantially underestimate how many breast cancer

patients are using complementary medicine, according to the results of a survey scheduled to be presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology, held virtually from June 4 to 8.

In late 2020, IQVIA conducted a national survey of 115 clinical oncologists who treat breast cancer and 164 [breast cancer patients](#) who had been diagnosed within two years of the survey.

The researchers found that nearly three-quarters of [breast cancer](#) patients (73 percent) reported using at least one type of complementary medicine after [cancer diagnosis](#), while oncologists believed the average was less than half (43 percent) of patients. Similar proportions of oncologists and patients believe that complementary and lifestyle therapies improve patients' quality of life (66 percent of oncologists and 65 percent of patients). Among the 12 modalities evaluated, the strongest correlation with positive impact on quality of life was seen for patient use of tai chi/chi gong or acupuncture. However, oncologists saw nutrition consultation, [support groups](#), psycho-oncology support, and exercise consultation as the most important integrative services and gave relatively low marks to spiritual services and meditation or mindfulness.

"While [conventional medicine](#) is effective for curing disease, it can fall short in helping patients heal," Wayne Jonas, M.D., a coauthor of the report, said in a statement. "Patients are turning to these therapies to [look]for hope and to improve their quality of life and well-being after diagnosis, but they are looking for more guidance from their oncologists."

More information: [Abstract](#)
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