

## Factors related to complementary/alternative medicine use among cancer patients in central Anatolia

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### ABSTRACT

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**Aims and background.** We aimed to evaluate the prevalence of and factors related to the use of complementary/alternative medicine among cancer patients undergoing or following conventional treatment at the Erciyes University Oncology Hospital in Central Anatolia.

**Study design and patients.** Face-to-face interview and a questionnaire were carried out with cancer patients attending the outpatient clinic of Medical Oncology. Questionnaire items included patients' demographic data, treatment, use of complementary/alternative medicine and possible related factors. Multivariate analysis was performed to compare the factors related to use of complementary/alternative medicine.

**Results.** A total of 268 consecutive cancer patients were enrolled in the study. Overall, 43% of the patients were using or had used complementary/alternative medicine. Totally, 90% of the patients using complementary/alternative medicine utilized herbs, and most of the herbs used were stinging nettle. Nearly half of the patients using complementary/alternative medicine (46.1%) were aiming to fight the disease. Among users, nearly half of them regarded the method used as effective and 54 (50.5%) suggested the use of complementary/alternative medicine to other patients. Only 23.1% of the patients discussed the use of complementary/alternative medicine with their physician. In logistic regression analysis, younger age, higher educational status, advanced stage of the disease, longer duration of the disease and current treatment status were significantly associated with the use of complementary/alternative medicine. In our regression model, the predictivity rate of these variables was 72.2% for use of complementary/alternative medicine according to the backward Wald test.

**Conclusions.** Use of complementary/alternative medicine among cancer patients in our center is modestly high, and the most common method is herbal therapy. Communication between the patient and the physician should be improved on this subject.

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**Key words:** *alternative medicine, cancer, complementary medicine, prevalence of use of complementary/alternative medicine.*

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