

About Integrative Medicine

A GUIDE TO SELF-CARE AND SUPPORT | SPRING 2021



Jun Mao, MD, MSCE
Chief, Integrative Medicine Service

CHIEF'S NOTE

With the arrival of spring, we welcome feelings of hope, renewal, and joy. We also recognize that it has been a year since the start of the pandemic. As we continue to navigate this new world together, we remain dedicated to supporting you and your loved ones in mind, body, and spirit.

In this issue, we share our latest virtual programming, including inspiring workshops and series, introduce an exciting new study on acupuncture for cognitive impairment - now enrolling, and share the results of a study on two types of acupuncture for pain. We also invite you to learn about the vital role of patient partners in integrative medicine research; discover MaZiRenWan, a botanical formula often used for constipation; and explore how dance/movement therapy can help you feel more joy.

Best wishes and be well,

Jun



Lead Acupuncturist Matthew Weitzman treats cancer-related side effects with acupuncture.

New Study on Acupuncture for Cognitive Difficulties Opens at MSK

By Christina M. Seluzicki

Nearly 75% of breast cancer survivors experience cancer-related cognitive difficulties (CRCD). People with CRCD may have problems with memory, concentration, organization, planning, and multi-tasking. There is early evidence that exercise and cognitive training may be helpful, but optimal treatments are lacking for this challenging condition.

A new clinical trial opening at MSK may expand treatment options for CRCD. The Effect and Mechanism of Acupuncture for Cancer-related Cognitive Impairment (ENHANCE) study aims to improve our understanding of acupuncture for the treatment of CRCD in breast cancer survivors. The study will also explore the connection between cognitive function and sleep health. Lead study investigator Dr. Jun J. Mao, chief of MSK's Integrative Medicine Service, says, "This study is built on some

really promising findings from our group indicating that acupuncture improved sleep and objective memory. By further studying acupuncture's role in sleep and cognition, we hope to build the rigorous evidence base of integrative therapies for cancer symptom management and healthy aging."

Researchers plan to enroll 260 participants into the study. Participants will be randomly assigned to an acupuncture group, a placebo acupuncture group, or a usual care group. Study co-investigator Dr. Kevin Liou, an MSK integrative medicine physician, adds, "If successful, the ENHANCE trial has the potential to improve cognitive health and quality of life for millions of cancer survivors."

To learn more about the ENHANCE study and determine your eligibility, call 646-888-0812 or email medenhancestudy@mskcc.org.

ONLINE WORKSHOP

Tai Chi for Healthy Aging: Better Sleep, Balance, and Immune Function

Wednesday, April 28, 2021, 6:00 to 7:15 PM

Cost: General public rate: \$25, [Integrative Medicine at Home](#) member rate: \$20

Instructors: Jun J. Mao, MD, MSCE, and Robin Hardbattle, LAC

Movement and activity are key for health and longevity. Incorporating the art of tai chi into your daily life will allow you to stay mobile and active for as long as possible. In this workshop, Integrative Medicine Service chief Dr. Jun J. Mao and MSK mind-body/tai chi instructor Robin Hardbattle will discuss the scientific evidence and benefits of tai chi and introduce some basic movements for you to practice.

Through the regular practice of tai chi:

- your strength, balance, and coordination will steadily improve, enabling you to move with more ease and confidence in your daily life
- you will experience a calm mind and relaxed body, which will encourage better sleep and regulate immune function.



Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

Jennifer Whitley, Dance/Movement Therapist, on Finding Joy

Jennifer Whitley, MS, BC-DMT, LCAT, CMA, is a board-certified dance/movement therapist and licensed creative arts therapist who works with adults and children at MSK. She loves being with patients when they begin to discover their bodies again during or after their cancer treatments and providing classes, workshops, and series – currently online through Integrative Medicine at Home – that offer community.



Between my cancer experience and the pandemic, I am having a hard time finding joy and connecting with my body. How can integrative medicine help me cope?

The cancer experience can be very isolating. When this is combined with the COVID-19 pandemic, you may understandably be struggling to feel joy and connection to yourself and to others. Your body image may also be deeply disrupted by a cancer diagnosis and treatments. You may experience a profound change in your sense of self that can impact your body and emotions as well as your desire to engage with others.

Dance/movement therapy is the psychotherapeutic use of movement to unite the mind, body, and emotions to deepen understanding of your feelings and personal stories. It can help you to cope and improve your quality of life. As a dance/movement therapist, I lead people through a safe experience of movement to release feelings and psychological tension; they can also become aware of personal strengths and inner resources through the body. By creating an expressive and playful space, you



Movement therapist Jennifer Whitley works with a pediatric patient at MSK

can experience feelings without becoming overwhelmed. This process can lead to a return to the joyful self.

Dance and dance therapy can also create a shared sense of community. Although we are not able to gather in person at this time, we can meet through virtual classes on Zoom. With so many of us feeling alone, there's no better way to connect with others than through moving as a group, being in rhythm as a community, and knowing that we are "together" even though we may be physically apart.

What does the research say?

Although research is limited, in the few noteworthy studies on dance therapy in cancer care, dance therapy decreased distress arising from perceptions of bodily

dysfunction, increased vigor, and improved quality of life in breast cancer patients. Additionally, research on the use of dance as exercise suggests positive mental health impact such as an increase in positive mood and decrease in stress.

To learn more about our virtual mind-body programming, visit bit.ly/MSKMindBodyWorkshops.

Do you have a question for our integrative medicine experts?

Email us with "Ask the Expert" in the subject line at aboutherbs@mskcc.org. We may feature your question in an upcoming issue!

Patient Partners in Integrative Medicine Research

By Jodi MacLeod

Jodi MacLeod is a patient advocate and cancer survivor who contributes to patient-centered outcomes research trials in MSK's Integrative Medicine Service (IMS). She also serves as secretary of the Society for Integrative Oncology (SIO), and co-chair of the SIO Patient Advocate Committee.



I have always believed in the power of clinical research and participated in clinical trials during my cancer treatment. We patients are key players in research as trial participants and as investigative partners. Now more than ever, clinicians and scientists are giving

patients a seat at the table to make the research process more inclusive of our voices.

My journey from participant to patient advisor began in 2013. Due to side effects of hormonal therapy, I was experiencing joint and muscle pain. I learned about a study on [acupuncture](#) for this kind of pain, and met Dr. Jun J. Mao, now chief of IMS, at my intake appointment. This was my introduction to integrative oncology research, which assesses the effectiveness of integrative therapies to ease symptoms and improve quality of life.

In 2015, I was invited to serve as a patient advisor in the [CHOICE Study](#), which compared the effectiveness of acupuncture and cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia. At stakeholder meetings, we

described our experiences with insomnia. Our input helped design a person-centered trial, the results of which will guide patients and their doctors worldwide in choosing which non-drug therapy for insomnia is best.

Today I continue my role as patient advisor in clinical trials at IMS like [IMPACT](#), which compares massage and acupuncture for pain in those with advanced cancer. My involvement includes sharing study results with patients and clinicians to ensure that they become part of standard clinical care. By participating in studies and partnering with research teams, our patient voice is improving the cancer experience around the world, one trial at a time.

Clinical Trial Finds Two Kinds of Acupuncture are Effective to Relieve Pain in Cancer Survivors

Chronic pain is a common and challenging condition to treat, particularly among people with cancer. Results of a three-year MSK study led by Integrative Medicine Service chief Dr. Jun J. Mao and funded by the Department of Defense demonstrate the effectiveness of two different types of acupuncture to treat chronic pain. The research team enrolled 360 cancer survivors from multiple ethnicities and included people diagnosed with different types of cancer, including prostate cancer, lymphoma, and breast cancer. They found that electroacupuncture and ear acupuncture both significantly reduced chronic pain and use of pain medications, and improved quality of life compared to usual care. But ear acupuncture was not as effective as electroacupuncture and led to more participants withdrawing from the study.

Results of this clinical trial were published in the March 18th issue of JAMA Oncology. Read more about this clinical trial [on our website](#).

ABOUT HERBS

MaZiRenWan

By Jyothirmai Gubili

Constipation is a distressing problem experienced by many patients with cancer. Standard treatments that include laxatives are not entirely effective and can

also have side effects. MaZiRenWan, also known as Hemp Seed Pill, is a botanical formula with a history of use in traditional Chinese medicine for managing constipation. It consists of six herbs that include hemp seed, apricot seed, and rhubarb root.

Clinical studies have shown that MaZiRenWan improves colonic transit, increases stool frequency, and reduces constipation. Our group recently published a comprehensive [systematic review](#) involving 17 clinical trials in which we found high-quality evidence of MaZiRenWan's safety and effectiveness against this common gastrointestinal complaint.



Meet Christine, an Integrative Medicine at Home member

“From day one, Donna was so welcoming and clear and direct about how to safely and effectively exercise... I felt so comfortable and had so much fun. During this pandemic, Donna helped me to have some form of ‘normal’... I say to all my family and friends I have so much energy from taking Donna’s class today! Now with my membership there are more options for trying new instructors and classes, such as meditation. Having a choice in classes is wonderful, because the journey of life is not always straight, it has curves and bumps to overcome.”



Integrative Medicine at Home Membership Program Details

As a member, you can enjoy:

- unlimited access to daily fitness and mind-body classes
- discounts on our small-group workshops and mind-body series
- connecting with your cancer community
- staying active while practicing social distancing
- learning new skills to increase resilience and decrease stress

Start your membership today.

Visit msk.org/athome or call 646-888-0800

Membership Fees

Monthly membership: \$25

Three-month membership: \$60

Six-month membership: \$120, plus one free workshop

Upcoming Online Programming

Yoga for Chemotherapy-induced Peripheral Neuropathy Workshop

Saturday, April 10, 12:00 to 1:15 PM

Instructors: Ting Bao, MD, DABMA, MS; Clare Patterson, E-RYT, Yoga4Cancer™ certified instructor; Tina Paul, MS, C-IAYT, E-RYT

In this workshop, you will hear about the latest research on integrative drug-free treatments for peripheral neuropathy and learn a series of gentle yoga postures, breathing techniques, and meditation to help reduce CIPN symptoms.

Mindful Self-Compassion Series

Begins Sunday, April 11, 7:00 to 8:15 PM

Instructor: Beth Sandweiss, MA, MSW, LPC

Most of us feel compassion for our close friends when they are struggling. What would it be like to give the same caring attention to yourself? This series is designed to help people impacted by cancer cultivate self-compassion, one of the greatest resources for coping and resilience.

Barre Basics Series

Begins Tuesday, April 13, 8:00 to 9:00 AM

Instructor: Jennifer Whitley, MA, BC-DMT, LCAT, CMA

With a focus on strengthening, alignment, and mobility, Barre Basics will help you tone your body and improve your range of motion so you can move with confidence.

Yoga for Better Balance Series

Begins Monday, April 19, 6:00 to 7:00 PM

Instructor: Clare Patterson, E-RYT, Yoga4Cancer™ certified instructor

Yoga is a safe, and low-impact fitness practice that strengthens muscles of the legs and core muscles, builds bone density, and promotes pelvic stability. This series is a great option for people interested in trying yoga who need a gentle activity as they recover from surgery and treatment.

Embodied Empowerment Through Movement and Music Workshop

Saturday, April 24, 11:00 AM to 12:15 PM

Instructors: Holly Mentzer, BC-MT, LCAT; Jennifer Whitley, MA, BC-DMT, LCAT, CMA

Following a cancer diagnosis, during treatment, and in survivorship, you may feel a sense of loss and disembodiment. In this lively workshop, you will have the chance to express your unique experiences and individuality through dance, movement, and music.

Resistance Band Training: Strength, Stretching, and Mobility Workshop

Wednesday, June 9, 1:00 to 2:15 PM

Instructor: Donna Wilson RN, MSN, RRT/Personal Trainer

During and after cancer treatment, you may experience loss of muscle mass that can lead to muscle weakness and fatigue. In this workshop, you will learn to use resistance bands to rebuild strength for all of your large muscle groups.

Bendheim Integrative Medicine Center
1429 First Avenue at East 74th Street

Appointments: 646-888-0800

www.mskcc.org/integrativemedicine