

TCM Cancer Sidebar

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More than 90 percent of cancer patients utilize some form of alternative medicine. Typically these patients need to go outside the mainstream medical community to have access to these therapies. However, in China, there is a well-developed system of using Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) in conjunction with the traditional Western medicine treatments, including radiation and chemotherapy.

Called *Fu Zheng* therapy, it translates as “support the person” therapy. “Cancer therapies attack the tumor,” said Adam Margoles, L.Ac. “TCM therapies are used to support the person to survive the toxicity of traditional treatment and support the body to recover and fight off future cancers.” In a program unique to Milwaukee, Margoles administers TCM acupuncture in-hospital at Columbia-St. Mary’s to patients who are on site receiving cancer treatment. Acupuncture helps alleviate the side effects of treatment, such as nausea, pain, anxiety, depression and insomnia. “This is an example of how acupuncture can work in conjunction with Western medicine,” Margoles said. “They can interact in an elegant and graceful way.”

Clinical studies and research on alternative therapies are relatively scant. But acupuncture is one of the more studied therapies. The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) Consensus Development Conference Statement on acupuncture states, “...promising results have been shown in post-operative and chemotherapy nausea and vomiting and in postoperative dental pain. There are other situations, such as addiction, stroke rehabilitation, headache, menstrual cramps, tennis elbow, fibromyalgia, myofascial pain, osteoarthritis, low back pain, carpal tunnel syndrome, and asthma, in which acupuncture may be useful as an adjunct treatment or an acceptable alternative or be included in a comprehensive management program. Further research is likely to uncover additional areas where acupuncture interventions will be useful.”

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