Complementary and alternative medicine use in thalassemia patients in Malaysia: A cross-sectional study

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the belief in complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), CAM use, and quality of life (QOL) among thalassemia patients. The study used a cross-sectional with convenience sampling. Data were collected at Thalassemia Society, Kedah, Malaysia from July to October 2015. The questionnaires included the Malay version and distributed to 390 thalassemia patients. The mean age (SD) of respondents was 25.40 (±10.2) years. Respondents were mostly consisted of women in a total of 221 (56.67%). Majority of respondents are Malay 361 (92.56%) and nearly all respondents 357 (91.54%) practices Islam as their religion. Also, most respondents have secondary level of education 256 (65.64%). Majority of respondents were unmarried 204 (52.30%) and 129 (33.1%) were unemployed. Two hundred one (51.5%) patients were diagnosed with β-thalassemia major. Thalassemia patients, on average, use one or more than two types of CAM. Type of β-Thalassemia Major (p<0.001), duration of disease for more than 5 years (p<0.001), received treatments in a form of surgery (p=0.03) and iron chelation therapy (p=0.01) with a history of side effects due to conventional treatment more give significant impact of thalassemia patients using CAM. The most CAM was use is mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT), which was 292 respondents (93.29%). CAM is frequently being used in thalassemia patients because their negative perceptions among conventional treatments among thalassemia patients who used CAM also to overcome the complications of their illnesses.

Keywords: thalassemia; complementary and alternative medicine; quality of life

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