

The use of complementary and alternative medicine in pregnancy preparation among women with breast cancer in Taiwan

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Background: Previous evidences indicated that female cancer patients suffered from infertility after cancer-related treatment. Use of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), particularly traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and natural products, in pregnancy preparation and fertility management is becoming increasingly common in Taiwan.

Objective: The study purposes are to describe the use of CAM among breast cancer women after cancer-related treatment in pregnancy preparation in Taiwan and to examine factors associated with the use of CAM.

Methods: Reproductive-age (20-49 years old) women with breast cancer after cancer-related treatment between January 2011 and December 2014 in a Taiwan city participated in the study. Interview was completed with 178 (62%) of those 287 eligible, asking about sociodemographic variables, disease/treatment characteristics, and the use of CAM.

Results: The CAM was used after cancer-related treatment by 8.4% of women with breast cancer. Approximately one-quarter (25.7%) of those women ever used CAM to increase the probability of pregnancy. The TCM was the most popular option (24.6%). Age was significantly different between CAM users and those who did not use CAM. The result of binary logistic regression showed that younger women less than 40 years old was the key predictor for using CAM when considering pregnancy (OR = 1.47; 95% CI: 1.84, 10.22).

Conclusions: This study found that younger women with breast cancer would search CAM, especially for TCM, to prepare pregnancy in Taiwan. Health providers should help them to choose safe TCM and increase the quality of cancer and pregnancy care.

Biography

Sheng-Miauh Huang has completed her PhD at the age of 35 years from National Yang-Ming University, Taipei, Taiwan. She is the assistant professor at the department of nursing, Mackay Medical College in Taiwan. She has published more than 20 papers in reputed journals, especially for cancer care.

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