

Integrative Medicine and Cancer Care

A Population Health Clerkship Investigation

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Population of focus: Patients living with cancer of any form
Epidemiology:

		black	white	Hispanic	Asian/Pacific Islander	American Indian/Alaska Native
Men	Incidence	554.5	499.7	393.5	310.1	293.5
	Death rate	253.9	203.2	146.4	126.2	136.0
Women	Incidence	393.8	414.8	324.2	279.8	261.0
	Death rate	166.2	143.4	98.0	91.1	93.9

<http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/dcpc/data/ethnic.htm>

Social determinants: An inverse correlation between cancer incidence and educational level/socioeconomic status, and an increased risk of distant-stage breast and prostate cancer at diagnosis for those with lower incomes, have both been demonstrated: by Clegg et al, 2009

Health Care Access Factors: Language, cost, transportation, knowledge of existing services, among other factors

Advocacy: The current focus of advocacy groups is to increase the availability of these services and ultimately improve the scope of care that is offered to patients.

Key advocacy groups:

- National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM)
- Society for Integrative Oncology
- American Holistic Medical Association

Service-Learning Project Goals:

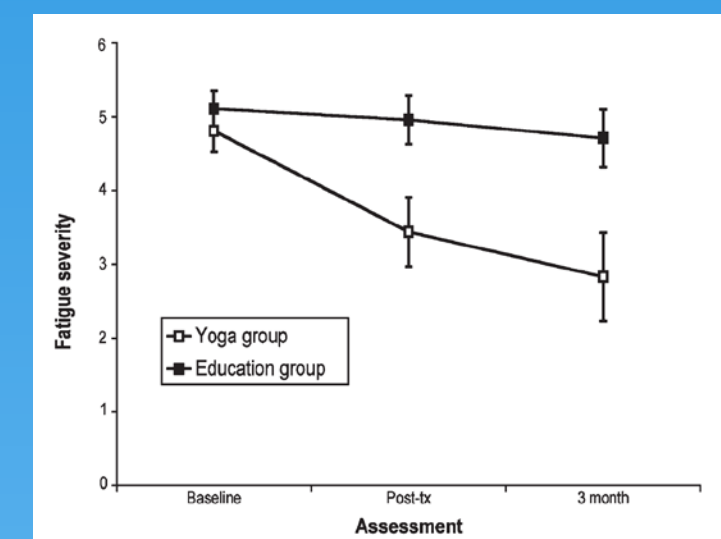
1. Gain a better understanding of and experience different practices involved in integrative medicine.
2. Provide an online resource about these modalities and how to access them.

Progress: We have compiled information and resources focused around three integrative modalities: Mindfulness/Meditation, Yoga, and Acupuncture. This information is available to patients online: Website: <http://www.umassintegrativemedicine.org>; see 'Resources'

Outcomes: A feedback survey link is on our resource webpage. It is too early to assess outcomes, but we anticipate that any feedback will provide guidance to future clerkship groups.

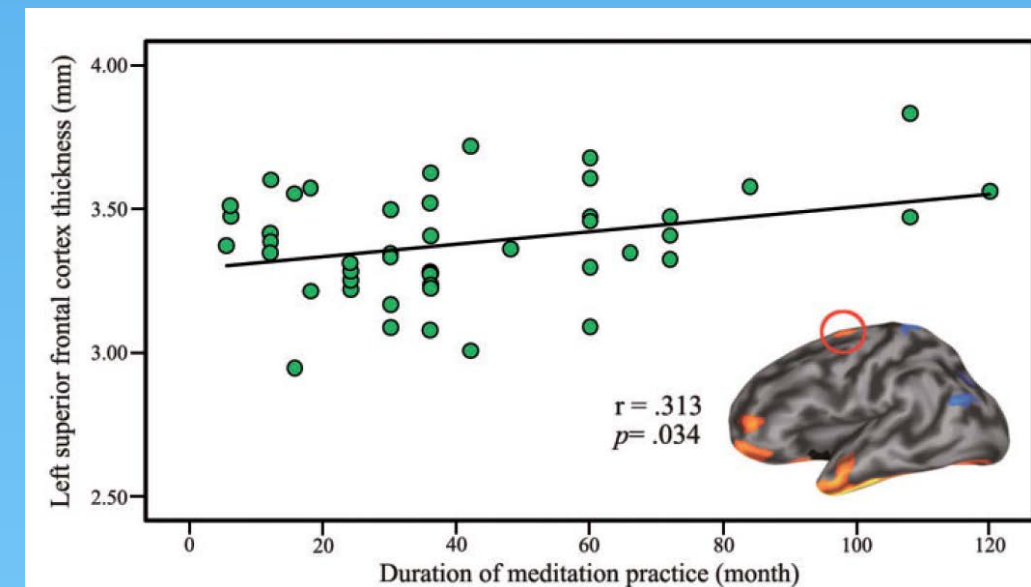
Integrative Medicine Modalities covered in online resource:

Yoga: A mind body practice combining physical postures, breathing techniques, and mindfulness exercises aimed at promoting general well-being.



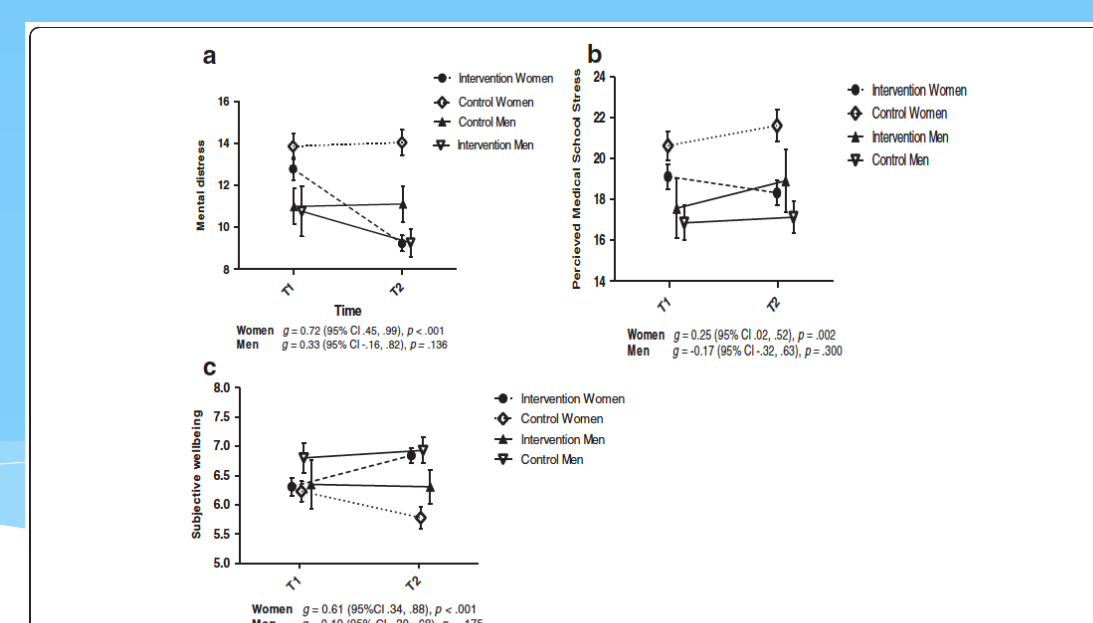
Yoga has been shown to positively impact symptoms such as fatigue and vigor in cancer patients (Bower, et al. 2011).

Meditation: The practice of clearing our minds of cluttered thoughts to achieve a relaxed mental and physical state.



Meditation has been shown to change brain structures associated with attentional and emotional regulation (Kang, et al. (2013))

Mindfulness: A practice of being fully present in each moment with non-judgmental acceptance.



Gender effects of MBSR intervention on mental distress, perceived medical school stress and subjective wellbeing (de Vibe, et. al, 2013)

Acupuncture: Acupuncture applies needles, heat, pressure, and other treatments to one or more places on the skin known as acupuncture points.

Yoga as a Complementary Health Approach

Yoga is One of the Top 10 Complementary Health Approaches

More than **13 million adults** in the U.S. practiced yoga in the previous year!
Yoga use increased from 5.1% to 6.1% between 2005 and 2007.

Why People Practice Yoga?

- 10.5% to help with chronic pain
- 16% to improve their overall health
- 5.8% to improve their mental health
- 22% to improve their physical fitness

Yoga's Impact on Low-Back Pain

Back pain is the **number one reason** people use complementary health practices. Studies found people practicing yoga experienced less back pain than those who did not.

Significantly **less disability, pain, and depression** after 6 months than patients in standard care.

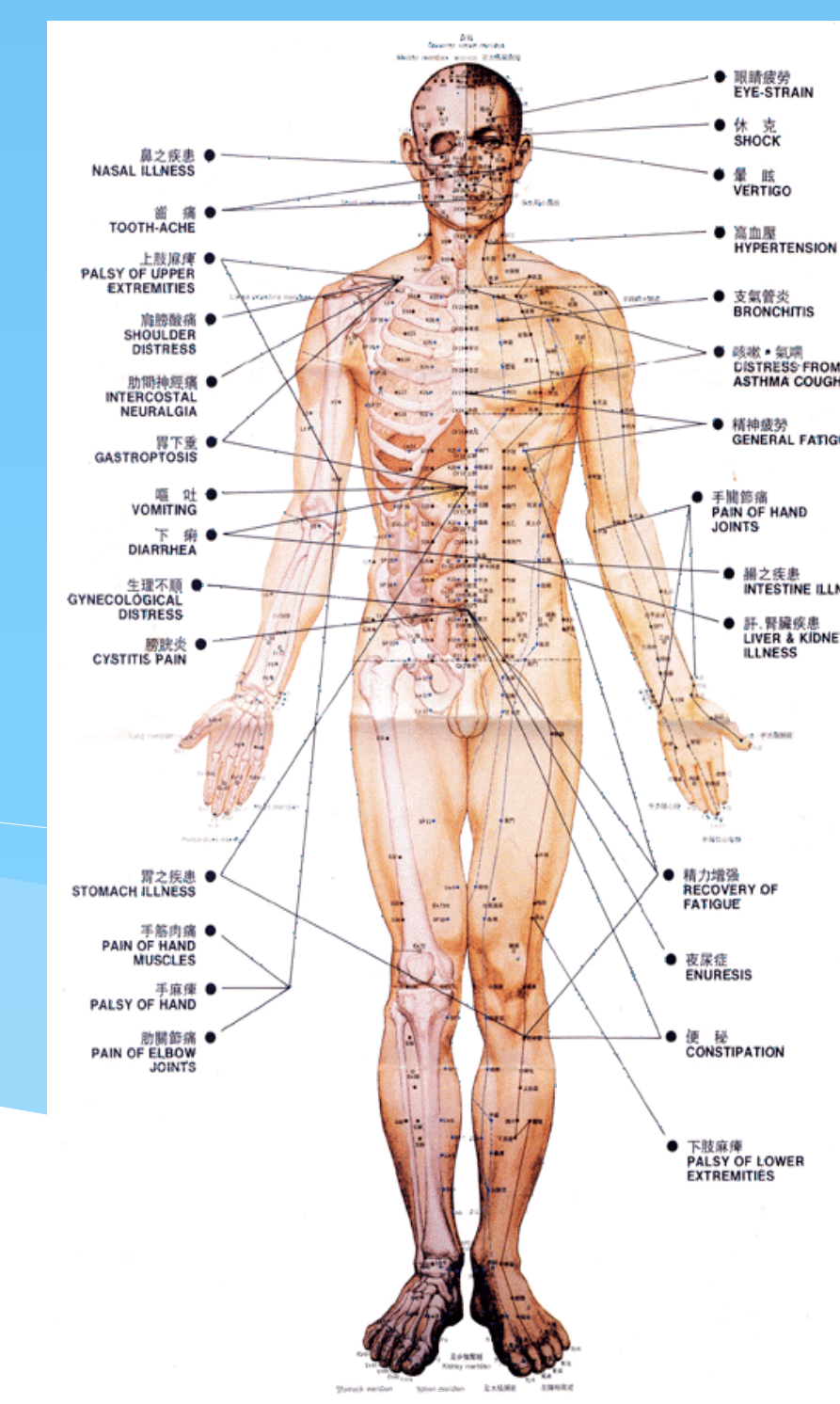
More pain relief than from a self-care book?
Better function than usual medical care?

Practice Yoga Safely

Follow these tips to minimize your risk of injury:

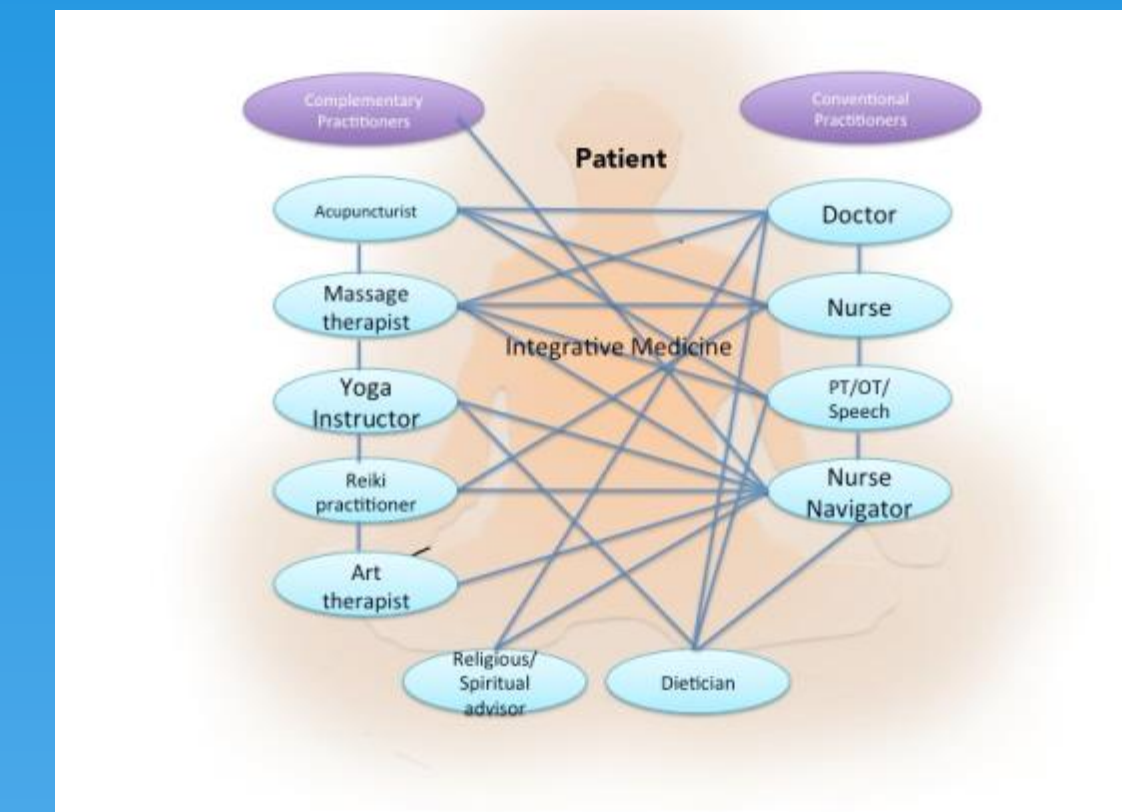
- Talk to your care provider
- Find a trained and experienced yoga practitioner
- Adapt poses to your individual needs and abilities

<http://nccam.nih.gov/news/multimedia/infographics/yoga>



<http://sonoranwellness.com/acupuncture/>

Interprofessional network:



Many of these perceptions come from the model at the Fitchburg HealthAlliance Hospital and the Simonds-Hurd Complementary Care Center, where complementary and conventional practitioners may have uniquely close contact.

Lessons Learned:

- It is essential for health practitioners to be familiar with integrative medicine, to feel comfortable discussing alternative therapies with patients, and to be open to hearing about these therapies in order to ensure a complete picture of a patient's care.
- Integrative therapies may help patients manage and cope with side effects of radiation, chemotherapy, and illness.
- Practices such as mindfulness, meditation, and yoga may be useful tools for us, as medical students and future health care practitioners, to maintain personal well-being and provide the best care for patients that we can.
- Integrative medicine can provide an opportunity for patients with cancer to take an active role in their treatment.

Recommendations for Next Steps:

- Our online component is a continually evolving resource: Additional resources and modalities can be added/updated on an ongoing basis.
- More integrative medicine and complementary care sites in the Worcester area to be explored
- Feedback from online survey to inform future content and organization of information on the website

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