

# The Use of Complementary and Alternative Medicine Among the Pediatric Cancer Patients in Ankara University School of Medicine Pediatric Oncology Clinic

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**Background/Objectives:** Complamantary Altarnative Medicine (CAM) is mostly traditional treatment modalities that most of the cancer patients may involve either informing their doctors or not. Since some of these treatment modalities may interfere with chemotherapy it is important to know if the patient is getting any of them.

**Design/Methods:** Frequency and reasons of the use of CAM, types of CAM method, socio-demographic characteristics of the patients that use CAM among the children that are being monitored with the diagnosis of cancer in Ankara University School of Medicine.

In this cross-sectional study, between February-November 2015, 139 pediatric cancer patients and their families were applied the survey form face-to-face when they are inpatient or outpatient clinic.

**Results:** Mean age was  $8.65 \pm 5.51$  (min:0.5, maks;18) years, 54.7% were male. The average age of patients which use CAM was  $10.6 \pm 5.42$ , while mean age was  $7.9 \pm 5.39$  ( $p < 0.05$ ) for didn't use CAM group. Patients with lower socio-economic status were tend to use more CAM. Advanced staged patients were found to have increased frequency of the use of CAM. All patients participating this study have mentioned about praying. About 27% of the patients were using other CAM methods as well. The patients that used CAM mostly used honey (59.5%), bee pollen/milk (56.8%) and molasses (%45.9). Almost 38% of the families were found to have applied for religious help for their patients (Hodja reading holy passages which are believed to be beneficiary). About 38% of the patients using CAM have informed their doctor. The most common reason of not consulting to physicians was thought of possible rejection(78.3%).

**Conclusions:** Most of patients are using CAM methods without the knowledge of physicians. None of the patients use CAM instead of medical treatment. All of the patients that admitted to hospital must be sufficiently informed, possible side effects of CAM and should given opportunity discuss with their doctors.