

The Use of Complementary and Alternative Medicine for Pain Relief in the Elderly: An Investigational Analysis of Seniors Residing in an Independent/Assisted Seniors' Living Facility

Authors : Carol Cameletti

Abstract : The goal of this study was to perform a pilot survey to assess pain frequency and intensity in an elderly population and to assess treatment options for chronic pain that include complementary and alternative medicines (CAM). Ten participants were recruited from an independent and supportive living housing facility in Northern Ontario and asked to complete two questionnaires: 1) a self-assessment on pain, and 2) the use of CAM for pain. Results from our study show that 80% of the participants experienced pains other than the regular everyday pains such as minor headaches, sprains or toothaches. Although participants stated that on average the highest level of pain they experienced within the past 24 hours had a score of 6.5 (0=no pain, 10=worst pain imaginable) the level of pain they experienced moderately interfered with their daily activities. Unfortunately, participants stated that they were only able to attain minimal levels of pain relief using treatments or medications causing some of the participants to seek alternative therapies or self-help practices. The most commonly used CAMs were vitamins/minerals, herbs and supplements, and self-help practices such as meditation, prayer, visualization and relaxation techniques. Although some of the participants stated that they had received complementary treatments directly from their physician, four of the nine participants said that they had not disclosed CAM use to their physician thereby indicating a need to open the lines of communication between healthcare providers and patients with regards to CAM use. It is our hope that the data generated from this study will serve as the platform for a pain management clinic that is client-centered, consumer-driven and truly integrative and tailored in order to meet the unique needs of older adults in Great Sudbury, Ontario.

Keywords : alternative, complementary, elderly, medicine

Conference Title : ICHMH 2018 : International Conference on Healthcare and Mental Health

Conference Location : Toronto, Canada

Conference Dates : June 21-22, 2018