

WORDS OF WELLNESS

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The importance of massage therapy for a cancer patient

By Kyle Devitt R.M.T.

You likely know someone who currently has cancer, or who has had cancer. The unfortunate reality is that we all do. In the past, cancer was viewed as an unknown and a contraindication for massage. The prevailing thought was that because massage increased blood and lymph flow, most malignancies could easily spread via your circulatory systems. Logically, it must then increase the likelihood of spreading cancer throughout the body to secondary sites. But, blood and lymph streams are not necessarily nice environments for mobile cancer cells. The important interaction is not between the cancer cells and the fluid flows, but between the cancer cells and the immune response. Besides these cancer cells having to defend against immune system defenders, once in the blood and lymph stream they are not well equipped for survival. Often cancer cells are not designed to absorb nutrients while in motion, or withstand the physical stresses of being flung around in the whirlpool of circulatory flow.

Another potential source of concern might be whether massage could "push" the remaining viable cancer cells more successfully into secondary sites. At first, this seems reasonable also, knowing that massage will increase circulation. However, the benefit of increased circulation is based on the direction of stimulation coming during venous return.

Consistently, investigations have shown cancers establish new sites based on tissue affinity patterns as opposed to the ease with which they can gain access. The cells must find tissues that will meet their specific needs, in order to metastasize according to their own specific patterns.

Dr. Gary Deng makes the point "people think that massage may cause cancer to spread and induce harm to patients...The more we understand how cancer cells spread, the more we realize stimulation of circulation will not make them spread... Cancer cells gain the ability to spread and grow in other body parts because they have mutated their genes, not because they are physically moved to a new location...This is like transplanting a plant to a place with different soil conditions, sunlight, temperature, and humidity. It will not survive if it cannot adapt to the new environment."

If the simple fact that increased circulation promotes cancer, surely the same results would be true in other ways. However, regular exercise, hot showers or baths, and a healthy sex life (all known to increase circulation) have long been deemed to NOT be a cancer risk. Have you ever heard of a cancer patient being told to avoid these activities for fear of the risk of metastasis? No, in fact the opposite is true. During most chemotherapy programs, patients are strongly encouraged to take part in fitness classes to help reduce anxiety and stress as well as increase energy, healing capacity, sleep, optimism, and the ability to cope. With respect to massage therapy's role, there's a growing body of evidence supporting it as having a crucial role in helping to achieve these beneficial outcomes.

The skills massage therapists offer their patients can make a real difference in how a person manages the incredible stress involved in fighting cancer. Massage therapists can help bring a new resilience to a survivor's fight, or we may help sustain a better quality of life during the time a person has; either one being a valuable and important role.

WELLNESS CENTRE NEWS

The clinic wishes to welcome Dr. Kristijana Rakic, Naturopathic Doctor to Goldsworthy Wellness Centre. She is working along side Dr. Robin Walsh and is in our office Wednesday afternoons.

Our office continues to be very busy and appointments are very much in demand for all our practitioners. Please remember it is important that if you cannot make your scheduled appointment, you give our office 24 hours notice so we may fill your spot with someone on our waiting list. Also, if you have trouble remembering your reserved time,

please make the front desk aware and we will provide you with a **courtesy** reminder call the day before. **Missed appointments are subject to a missed visit fee.**

Join Dr. Robin Walsh and Dr. Kristijana Rakic for their 6 week Vibrant Living lecture series. This series will help you to improve your quality of life and get the energy and vitality you deserve. Learn about healthy weight loss, nutritious eating, lowering stress, detoxification, setting goals and much more! The cost is \$199.00 for the series and includes 3 BIA screens. The cost can be put through your extended benefits under Naturopathic coverage. Visit their website at www.vibrant-living.ca to reserve your spot. Space is limited.

Congratulations to Jane Tallman on winning the queen mattress set donated to our clinic by Waterloo Mattress for the promotion of "Sleep Month" in November.

Congratulations to Sara Clark who was the winner of our snow shovel draw in January. Unfortunately, we know she got a lot of use out of it this winter.

Congratulations to Barb Rozell-Knechtel for winning our Love Your Pet draw. She submitted a picture of her dog and entered her name into our draw for Love Your Pet month. All products for the pet basket were purchased from Global Pet Foods on Strasburg Road in Kitchener. Thank you to Global's owner, Natalie Seguin.

Remember to have your family participate in Earth Hour on March 28th. Between 8:30 and 9:30 turn off all your electricity consuming items in your home. Make a global statement of concern about climate change.

Effective May 1, 2009, there will be a price increase for patients of Tara Blain. She will be raising the price of her one hour acupuncture treatment to \$70.00. The new fees for her shiatsu treatments will be \$35.00 for a half hour and \$70.00 for a one hour treatment.

Speak to Dr. Jeff and Lesley about what they learned at the sessions they attended in Ottawa. Dr. Jeff expanded his knowledge of x-rays and MRIs and Les learned new marketing and communication techniques.

Congratulations to Dr. Jeff for winning 3 Provincial badminton titles.

MONTHLY FEATURES

March is Brain Health Month. Come into our office to learn about keeping your brain in optimal working order. Also submit your picks for names of our 2 new African frogs. If your name picks are chosen you will win a bike helmet to help keep your brain in its optimal condition this biking season.

Wednesday April 22nd is Earth Day. Come into our office throughout the month and enter your name into our draw for garden tools. Also, get involved in the community this Earth Day. Check out www.earthday.ca to see all the activities going on for you and your family to get involved in this April.

May is physical fitness month. Come into our office to see one of practitioners during this month and enter your name into the draw for a personal training session with Betty Ann Schnurr, CK, RRP.

THANKS FOR THE REFERRALS!

Chris Edwards, Darlene McMurdie, Shirley Kavanaugh, David Kassik, Mark Seupersaud, Nancy Carse, Suzanne Illes, Catherine Eckert, James Chindamo, Chris Weber, Kira Scheffelmeier, Jeff Zdrahal, Ethel Spike, Val Daigen, Andy Fischer, Geoff Smith, Paul Stefanson, Denise Sousa, Melissa McDonald, Karen Luft, Ainsley Wheldon, Mark Ryan, Walter Semeniuk, Brad Niereisel, Terry Goldsworthy, Mamta Sharma, Laura Roth

The Stork Has Landed!

Congratulations to Brook McRae and family on the arrival of Whitney Grace on February 3rd. Whitney arrived weighing a healthy 7lbs 8ozs.

ASK A PRACTITIONER

Q: Should I have an MRI to determine what is causing my back pain?

A: Many people think that in order to properly treat their back pain they need to first have a diagnosis that is determined by “seeing” the structural abnormality on a diagnostic test, such as an MRI or CT scan. X-rays generally show the alignment of the vertebrae, whether there is degeneration of the bones, and whether the disc space between vertebrae is decreased or normal. An MRI or CT scan can show both the condition of the soft tissues and the bones. This is useful when we need to confirm whether a disc has herniated or degenerated and if it is impinging on a nerve. When people who have back pain acquire an MRI or CT scan which shows that they have an “abnormality” such as a herniated or bulging disc, a compressed nerve, or facet joint degeneration they usually automatically think that the abnormality is the cause of their back pain. Johnson, 2002 (in “The Multifidus Solution”) summarizes the research that shows that the observed abnormality is *not necessarily* the cause of the back pain. Prior to 2002, the research showed that in general, 64% of people have disc abnormalities, such as herniations and bulging discs, 8% of people have degeneration of the facet joints, and 24% of people have compressed nerves, and these people all have no reported pain symptoms! For this reason a MRI or CT scan should never be used to make the diagnosis. The MRI or CT scan should only be used to confirm a doctor’s diagnosis. In general, the diagnosis from an MRI is not always helpful to the rehabilitation professional, or the patient. The patient may develop an increased disability behaviour, because now they have been diagnosed with a definite abnormality, which subconsciously may lead them to change their activity level, and focus on their disability more, leading to lifestyle changes and absence from work. (“I am doomed now, because I have degenerative disc disease!”). They usually don’t fully understand the diagnosis, and just the sound of it makes them feel worse. They feel that the only way to decrease the back pain is to “fix” the problem, such as with surgery. Back pain is sign that something is wrong and needs to be checked, just like the engine light on your car. Back pain needs to be diagnosed using a physical examination and if needed further diagnostic testing that confirms the diagnosis. Research has shown that people who follow a specific exercise program experience less back pain, and a decreased duration of the pain condition. This is likely because most back pain is caused by instability of the spine, poor body mechanics and posture, and if we build up the stability in the muscles, this will help to prevent injuries, including disc herniations, bulges and degeneration.

Surgeons like to use MRI diagnosis to determine whether back surgery is the best option for treatment. But the number of back surgeries has decreased, because research has shown that more conservative treatments, such as specific exercises are more effective than surgery, except for very complicated cases.

In summary, if a doctor questions other potential medical causes for back pain, such as internal organ disease, an MRI would be more warranted, than if a person has just started to experience back pain. Most back pain conditions can be assessed and rehabilitated using exercises, without observing the actual structural abnormality.

WELLNESS NOTES

I was diagnosed with 2 herniated disks in my neck about 6 years ago. I started on medication to help handle the pain shortly after my diagnosis. I have tried numerous things besides the daily medication to find a way to control the pain. I have endured intense sessions of Bowen Therapy, Laser therapy, Chiropractic care, Acupuncture and nerve block injections, but I still received no relief.

I then heard about the Low Back Clinic in Waterloo. I investigated the procedure and called the clinic to book my free consultation with Dr. Ryan Larson. He examined me and looked at the MRI report to determine whether I could be a candidate for the DRX 9000. After his thorough investigation, Dr. Ryan determined that I would qualify for decompression treatments. I booked them right away.

I came to the office 4 times per week for 5 weeks for my treatments. Dr. Ryan also gave me a progress exam on my 11th visit and an exit exam at the end of the 20 visits. He also included a free pair of orthotics.

I am happy to say that I have had a dramatic reduction in pain. I no longer suffer from spasms, numbness and tingling. I have had a reduction in the chronic headaches I suffered, my neck and shoulder pain has decreased and I no longer feel physically drained all day. Any pain that I do still incur is minimal and very bearable.

I would recommend that if you suffer from herniated disks like I did, that you contact the office and book an appointment with Dr. Ryan or Dr. Jeff.

**The DRX 9000 treats degenerative disk disease, disk herniations and arthritis of the spine with an almost 90% success rate in only 20 visits.*

NOTE: Spinal decompression treatments can only be performed on the cervical (neck) and lumbar (low back) areas of the spine.

CENTRE PRACTITIONERS

Chiropractor

Dr. Jeff Goldsworthy, HBSc. D.C.

Dr. Ryan Larson, BSc. D.C.

Massage Therapy

Kyle Devitt, R.M.T.

Pam Gingrich, R.M.T.

Shiatsu Therapist and Acupuncture

Tara Blain, CST, Ac.

Naturopathic Doctor

Robin Walsh, BAsC. (Nutrition) N.D.

Kristijana Rakic, BSc. N.D.

Kinesiologist

Betty Ann Schnurr, C.K., RRP