

Integrated Cancer Care: Chemo-Induced Vertigo

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Introduction: This case study shows an example of chiropractic being utilized in the integrative setting for treatment of a patient with cancer. This patient was being treated with Gleevec for chronic myelogenous leukemia (CML) since 2005. Since beginning the drug and having the dosage changed several times, with other drugs administered in between, the patient has suffered from chronic vertigo and sinus pain due to mucosal membrane inflammation from chemotherapy. The patient reported the vertigo to be most significant when rising from a prone or supine position. Repositioning herself during sleep had become contributory.

Objective: Oncology care has a host of side effects that can often be treated with complementary therapies. Specifically, chiropractic may be used for conditions beyond common musculoskeletal complaints.

Case Report: Patient is a 54-year-old female diagnosed with CML in 2005. She began treatment that year and has since suffered with several side effects, one significant side effect being vertigo. The patient received a cervical orthopedic and chiropractic evaluation on June 7, 2011. Atlas was found to have restricted motion on left rotation with passive range of motion with left posteriority. Foraminal compression was positive on the left side at the C3-4 level. Hypertonicity was moderately severe in the suboccipital triangle on the left.

Treatment consisted of soft-tissue mobilization of the involved suboccipital region and cervical joint mobilization. The patient immediately reported reduced stress and was able to rise from a supine position more easily with less dizziness. When she returned two days later for follow-up treatment, she reported a 70-percent improvement of her vertigo symptoms.

Conclusion: This patient experienced significant and immediate, lasting relief of vertigo symptoms after one chiropractic treatment. More patients on chemotherapy should be assessed for vertigo and referred for chiropractic evaluations.

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