By Christina M. Seluzicki

Nearly 75% of breast cancer survivors experience cancer-related cognitive difficulties (CRCD). People with CRCD may have problems with memory, concentration, organization, planning, and multi-tasking. There is early evidence that exercise and cognitive training may be helpful, but optimal treatments are lacking for this challenging condition.

A new clinical trial opening at MSK may expand treatment options for CRCD. The Effect and Mechanism of Acupuncture for Cancer-related Cognitive Impairment (ENHANCE) study aims to improve our understanding of acupuncture for the treatment of CRCD in breast cancer survivors. The study will also explore the connection between cognitive function and sleep health. Lead study investigator Dr. Jun J. Mao, chief of MSK’s Integrative Medicine Service, says, “This study is built on some really promising findings from our group indicating that acupuncture improved sleep and objective memory. By further studying acupuncture’s role in sleep and cognition, we hope to build the rigorous evidence base of integrative therapies for cancer symptom management and healthy aging.”

Researchers plan to enroll 260 participants into the study. Participants will be randomly assigned to an acupuncture group, a placebo acupuncture group, or a usual care group. Study co-investigator Dr. Kevin Liou, an MSK integrative medicine physician, adds, “If successful, the ENHANCE trial has the potential to improve cognitive health and quality of life for millions of cancer survivors.”

To learn more about the ENHANCE study and determine your eligibility, call 646-888-0812 or email medenhancestudy@mskcc.org.
**Jodi MacLeod** is a patient advocate and cancer survivor who contributes to patient-centered outcomes research trials in MSK’s Integrative Medicine Service (IMS). She also serves as secretary of the Society for Integrative Oncology (SIO), and co-chair of the SIO Patient Advocate Committee.

I have always believed in the power of clinical research and participated in clinical trials during my cancer treatment. We patients are key players in research as trial participants and as investigative partners. Now more than ever, clinicians and scientists are giving patients a seat at the table to make the research process more inclusive of our voices.

My journey from participant to patient advisor began in 2013. Due to side effects of hormonal therapy, I was experiencing joint and muscle pain. I learned about a study on acupuncture for this kind of pain, and met Dr. Jun J. Mao, now chief of IMS, at my intake appointment. This was my introduction to integrative oncology research, which assesses the effectiveness of integrative therapies to ease symptoms and improve quality of life.

In 2015, I was invited to serve as a patient advisor in the **CHOICE Study**, which compared the effectiveness of acupuncture and cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia. At stakeholder meetings, we described our experiences with insomnia. Our input helped design a person-centered trial, the results of which will guide patients and their doctors worldwide in choosing which non-drug therapy for insomnia is best.

Today I continue my role as patient advisor in clinical trials at IMS like **IMPACT**, which compares massage and acupuncture for pain in those with advanced cancer. My involvement includes sharing study results with patients and clinicians to ensure that they become part of standard clinical care. By participating in studies and partnering with research teams, our patient voice is improving the cancer experience around the world, one trial at a time.
Clinical Trial Finds Two Kinds of Acupuncture are Effective to Relieve Pain in Cancer Survivors

Chronic pain is a common and challenging condition to treat, particularly among people with cancer. Results of a three-year MSK study led by Integrative Medicine Service chief Dr. Jun J. Mao and funded by the Department of Defense demonstrate the effectiveness of two different types of acupuncture to treat chronic pain. The research team enrolled 360 cancer survivors from multiple ethnicities and included people diagnosed with different types of cancer, including prostate cancer, lymphoma, and breast cancer. They found that electroacupuncture and ear acupuncture both significantly reduced chronic pain and use of pain medications, and improved quality of life compared to usual care. But ear acupuncture was not as effective as electroacupuncture and led to more participants withdrawing from the study.

Results of this clinical trial were published in the March 18th issue of JAMA Oncology. Read more about this clinical trial on our website.

Meet Christine, an Integrative Medicine at Home member

“From day one, Donna was so welcoming and clear and direct about how to safely and effectively exercise... I felt so comfortable and had so much fun. During this pandemic, Donna helped me to have some form of ‘normal’... I say to all my family and friends I have so much energy from taking Donna’s class today! Now with my membership there are more options for trying new instructors and classes, such as meditation. Having a choice in classes is wonderful, because the journey of life is not always straight, it has curves and bumps to overcome.”

Upcoming Online Programming

Yoga for Chemotherapy-induced Peripheral Neuropathy Workshop
Saturday, April 10, 12:00 to 1:15 PM
Instructors: Ting Bao, MD, DABMA, MS; Clare Patterson, E-RYT, Yoga4Cancer™ certified instructor; Tina Paul, MS, C-AYT, E-RYT

In this workshop, you will hear about the latest research on integrative drug-free treatments for peripheral neuropathy and learn a series of gentle yoga postures, breathing techniques, and meditation to help reduce CIPN symptoms.

Mindful Self-Compassion Series
 Begins Sunday, April 11, 7:00 to 8:15 PM
 Instructors: Beth Sandweiss, MA, MSW, LPC

Most of us feel compassion for our close friends when they are struggling. What would it be like to give the same caring attention to yourself? This series is designed to help people impacted by cancer cultivate self-compassion, one of the greatest resources for coping and resilience.

Barre Basics Series
Begins Tuesday, April 13, 8:00 to 9:00 AM
Instructor: Jennifer Whitley, MA, BC-DMT, LCAT, CMA

With a focus on strengthening, alignment, and mobility, Barre Basics will help you tone your body and improve your range of motion so you can move with confidence.

Integrative Medicine at Home Membership Program Details

As a member, you can enjoy:
• unlimited access to daily fitness and mind-body classes
• discounts on our small-group workshops and mind-body series
• connecting with your cancer community
• staying active while practicing social distancing
• learning new skills to increase resilience and decrease stress

Start your membership today. Visit msk.org/athome or call 646-888-0800

Membership Fees
Monthly membership: $25
Three-month membership: $60
Six-month membership: $120, plus one free workshop

ABOUT HERBS
MaZiRenWan
By Jyothirmai Gubili

Constipation is a distressing problem experienced by many patients with cancer. Standard treatments that include laxatives are not entirely effective and can also have side effects. MaZiRenWan, also known as Hemp Seed Pill, is a botanical formula with a history of use in traditional Chinese medicine for managing constipation. It consists of six herbs that include hemp seed, apricot seed, and rhubarb root.

Clinical studies have shown that MaZiRenWan improves colonic transit, increases stool frequency, and reduces constipation. Our group recently published a comprehensive systematic review involving 17 clinical trials in which we found high-quality evidence of MaZiRenWan’s safety and effectiveness against this common gastrointestinal complaint.

Bendheim Integrative Medicine Center
1429 First Avenue at East 74th Street
Appointments: 646-888-0800
www.mskcc.org/integrativemedicine

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Yoga for Better Balance Series
Begins Monday, April 19, 6:00 to 7:00 PM
Instructor: Clare Patterson, E-RYT, Yoga4Cancer™ certified instructor

Yoga is a safe, and low-impact fitness practice that strengthens muscles of the legs and core muscles, builds bone density, and promotes pelvic stability. This series is a great option for people interested in trying yoga who need a gentle activity as they recover from surgery and treatment.

Embodied Empowerment Through Movement and Music Workshop
Saturday, April 24, 11:00 AM to 12:15 PM
Instructors: Holly Mentzer, BC-MT, LCAT; Jennifer Whitley, MA, BC-DMT, LCAT, CMA

Following a cancer diagnosis, during treatment, and in survivorship, you may feel a sense of loss and disembodiment. In this lively workshop, you will have the chance to express your unique experiences and individuality through dance, movement, and music.

Resistance Band Training: Strength, Stretching, and Mobility Workshop
Wednesday, June 9, 1:00 to 2:15 PM
Instructor: Donna Wilson RN, MSN, RRT/Personal Trainer

During and after cancer treatment, you may experience loss of muscle mass that can lead to muscle weakness and fatigue. In this workshop, you will learn to use resistance bands to rebuild strength for all of your large muscle groups.