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# **Complementary and alternative medicines for cancer treatment – a patient perspective**

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## Abstract

Current research shows people diagnosed with cancer have a strong interest for complementary alternative medicine (CAM) to be an option for either sole treatment or used alongside conventional methods. This qualitative study aimed to investigate the attitudes of a sample of cancer patients to establish why they use CAM and explore their beliefs on the benefits (if any) they have from receiving this treatment. It is hoped that the current study will add to the limited CAM literature from Aotearoa.

The findings presented in this study arise from the thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with five participants. They included adults diagnosed with any type of cancer who were currently undergoing, or had undergone either CAM treatment or a combination of CAM and mainstream treatment. The interviewees openly discussed their cancer journey and from these deliberations the five main themes found were: decision; empowerment; holistic; wellbeing; and social harm. While there were similarities found with other studies regarding why patients chose CAM, the thesis also discovered the participants were now wanting to share their information and experience with others considering CAM for cancer treatment, but did not know how.

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