

Introduction

- Cancer patients receiving chemotherapy / biotherapy infusions (CBI) often experience symptoms, including pain, anxiety, fatigue, and/or nausea (Polovich, Olsen, & Lebre, 2014). Complementary treatments, such as Therapeutic Massage (TM), are safe, non-invasive ways that holds promise for decreasing adverse symptoms in cancer patients receiving CBI, along with mainstream care.
- There is a growing body of literature related to the efficacy of TM in the conventional medical community and in the oncology patient population (Collinge, McDonald, & Walton, 2012; Robison & Smith, 2016)
- An inter-professional collaboration between the licensed massage therapist (LMT) and oncology nurses resulted in strategies to reduce symptoms and create a healing environment through the use of TM.

Purpose

- To describe cancer patients' perceptions of pain, fatigue, nausea, anxiety and overall satisfaction with TM when provided concurrently during CBI.



Methods

DESIGN - A prospective single convenience group, using a pre/post design.

SETTING - The Christ Hospital Health Network, an academic, comprehensive, outpatient cancer center in Cincinnati, OH.

POPULATION - Cancer outpatients receiving chemotherapy / biotherapy infusion (CBI).

STUDY PROCEDURES

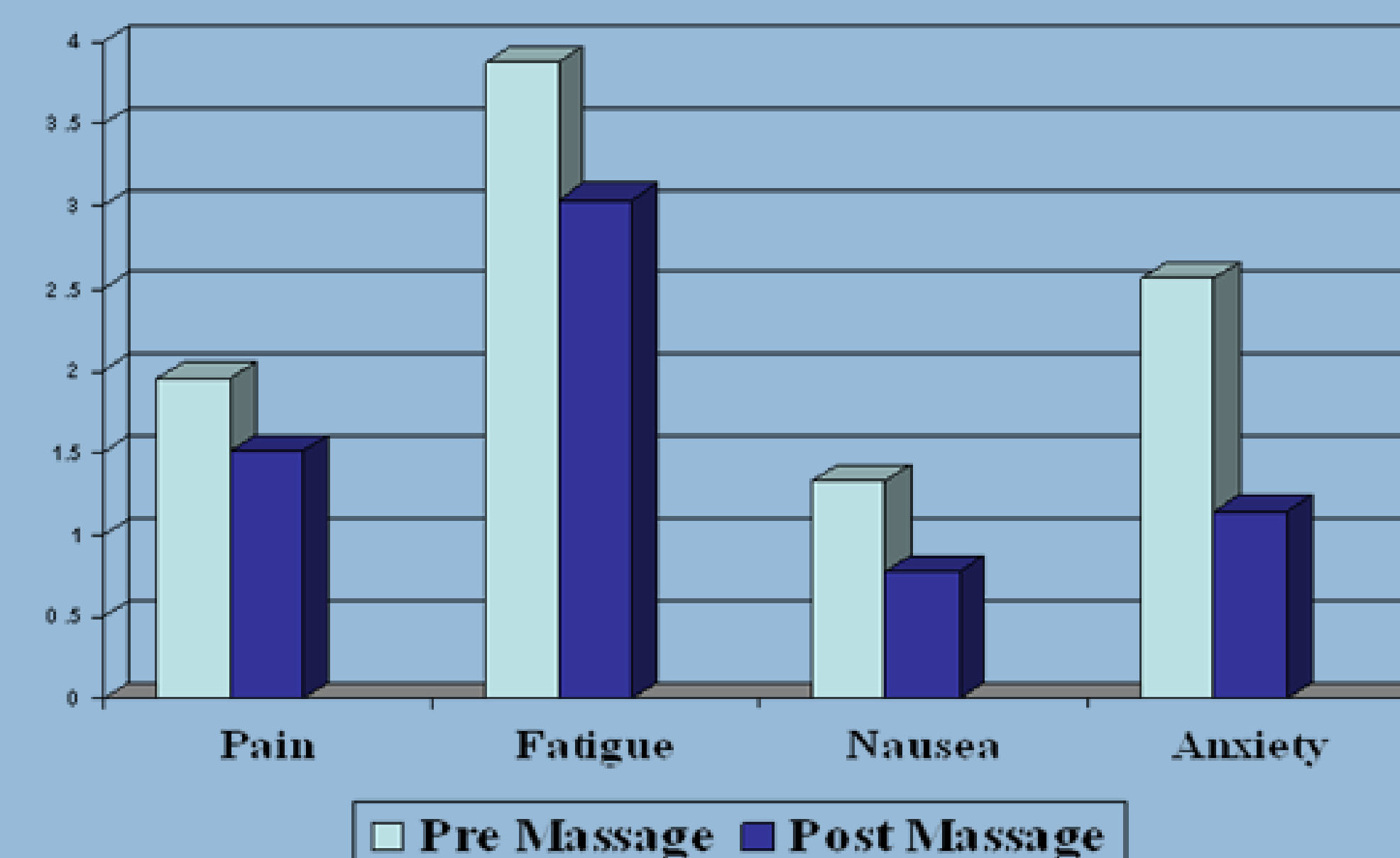
- After obtaining consent, participants rated their intensity of 4 symptoms: pain, fatigue, nausea, and anxiety.
- Ratings were documented on a 0-10 visual analogue scale (VAS).
- Approximately 20 minutes post-TM, participants rated the intensity of 4 symptoms using the same VAS scale.
- Qualitative and quantitative data related to patients' perceived satisfaction with TM was obtained.

INTERVENTION

- LMT provided 15-20 minutes of hand and/or foot TM to patients receiving CBI.
- Each TM session utilized effleurage, a slow, full-hand, long flowing or gliding stroke following lotion application.
- For participants with lymph node removal, effleurage was performed toward the heart, since lymph flows upward toward the neck.
- The LMT modified the amount of pressure for patients, according to Massage Pressure Guidelines (MacDonald, 2014).

Results

- Subjects (n=58), who were mostly female with breast cancer, participated in this study. Post-TM results demonstrated a statistically significant reduction in these symptoms:
 - ❖ Pain ($p < 0.002$)
 - ❖ Fatigue ($p = 0.000$)
 - ❖ Anxiety ($p = 0.000$)
 - ❖ Nausea ($p < 0.018$)
- Subjects reported high satisfaction, with mean score of 4.7/5.0.



Conclusion

- Based on this study's results, TM is an effective intervention for decreasing pain, anxiety, fatigue, and nausea in cancer patients.
- Anecdotally, subjects reported decreased peripheral neuropathy symptoms post-TM.

Themes

- **Positive impact of massage** – “Very relaxing and calming.”
- **Distraction** – “It takes your mind off this garbage.”
- **Holistic impact of massage** – “It’s the whole thing; your body is not just cancer, it’s the whole crap that goes with it.”
- **Symptom improvement** – “She makes your legs feel like rubber and not a heavy weight.”
- **Impact on satisfaction with TCH Cancer Center** – “Very well done. Upgrades the service.”

Significance of Outcomes

- Through the use of massage therapy, cancer patient's experience of symptoms related to CBI can be decreased.
- Inter-professional team collaboration is critical to success of a safe, effective oncology TM program.
- Results of this study were published in *Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing* (April, 2016).

