

# Use of Quranotherapy in children with cancer: A type of traditional and complementary medicine

Uso de la coranoterapia en niños con cáncer: un tipo de medicina tradicional y complementaria

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## Dear Editor:

Traditional and complementary medicine (T&CM) strategies encompass health care practices and traditions that exist outside of the dominant biomedical health perspective, known as conventional medicine. T&CM is a health practice with strong historical and cultural roots, which has global acceptability and applicability. Today, T&CM use is on the rise. The use of T&CM in pediatric oncology is common worldwide, with prevalence of use ranged from 6% to 100% <sup>[1]</sup>. Quranotherapy (or Quranic therapy), a type of T&CM, involves reciting, reading, and listening to the Quran and has been used to improve physical, social, mental, spiritual and/or religious health for more than 1400 years <sup>[2]</sup>. Herein, we discuss use of Quranotherapy in children with cancer to draw attention to use of the Quran as a “healing book” <sup>[3]</sup> in clinical care.

A systemic review revealed that Quran recitation on cancer cell cultures inhibited cancer cell viability, proliferation and migration <sup>[4]</sup>. Animal studies showed that Quran recitation increased T lymphocyte activity among the cancer cells <sup>[4]</sup>. Quranotherapy also decreased pain, stress, and anxiety levels and incidence of chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting in adult patients with various types of cancer <sup>[2][4]</sup>. Quranotherapy, one of the T&CM types, is frequently used by parents of children with cancer. In a case series, the rate of T&CM use among parents of children with cancer was 61%, and half of the parents used Quranotherapy <sup>[5]</sup>.

Spiritual care including Quranotherapy significantly increased adjustment of children with cancer undergoing chemotherapy <sup>[6]</sup>. Quranotherapy also significantly reduced pain in children with cancer <sup>[7]</sup>. Faheim *et al.* <sup>[8]</sup> examined the effect of Quranotherapy and music on reducing chemotherapy induced anxiety and pain in children with cancer by using numerical rating scale for pain and Hamilton anxiety rating scale for anxiety and their parents’ satisfaction. The proportion of children with severe pain decreased from 58% to 5% in the Quranotherapy group, while it decreased from 30% to 12% in the music group. After the intervention, 50% and 30% of children had no anxiety in the Quranotherapy and music groups, respectively. Quranotherapy was found more effective than music therapy. Additionally, parent satisfaction was higher in the Quranotherapy group than in the music group <sup>[8]</sup>. We think that Quranotherapy has potential benefits not only on the physical and mental health of children with cancer, but also their social and spiritual health, because the relationships between physical, mental, social, spiritual and religious health is very close, often intertwined, profound and symbiotic <sup>[9]</sup>.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize that T&CM use is common in both adult and pediatric oncology worldwide. Quranotherapy, a type of T&CM, is also widely used by cancer patients and their parents/caregivers. A limited number of studies have shown that Quranotherapy is beneficial in improving adjustment and in reducing pain and anxiety in children with cancer. We recommend that comprehensive and randomized controlled studies should be conducted about use of Quranotherapy in children with cancer in societies with different cultures and religious beliefs. These studies will fill the gap in the literature.

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