

Spiritual healing for women with breast cancer

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Breast cancer

Most common cancer in women

Initial treatments- surgery/
radiotherapy/ chemotherapy

Long term treatment- hormonal
therapy

‘Drug holiday’ ? ?



Spiritual healing – a complementary therapy



The study.....

- 12 breast cancer patients
- 10 healing sessions with qualified healers
- Replicating usual practice



Method - Study 1

Unitary Appreciative Inquiry -

A non-categorical holistic
qualitative method

Recording breast cancer
patient's life patterns during a
course of Spiritual healing



Recruitment Issues.....

- Initial plan to recruit through the local breast cancer clinic
- “Hocus Pocus”
- “Medicine deals with the side effects”
- Other avenues of recruitment



Data.....

- Patient daily log
- Healer session reports
- One to one interviews
- Researcher field notes



Findings.....

Expressions of patient experiences

Hot Flushes / night sweats

*Well they're virtually non-existent....
Yeah virtually gone, the hot
flushes..... It's happened since
the healing started so, yeah I would
think it is the healing
(Violet)*



I had hot flushes That's another thing that has definitely improved – my daily hot flushes. I still find I get them if I get slightly agitated

(Fuchsia)

Oncologists have no idea how debilitating hot flushes and night sweats are, and no idea of what it is like to be a woman with breast cancer (Rose)



Joint aches

*I was really crippled with joint pain, walking, anything, sitting lying down was painful I couldn't hold a book I could hardly write or use the computer..... And I came for my first session and 50% of my joint pain disappeared. And I can remember, that's just 40 minutes, and I can remember sitting with my friends ...expecting it all to come back (laughter). So over the weeks... the joint pain has virtually gone
(Foxglove)*



More energy – re-engagement
with old activities

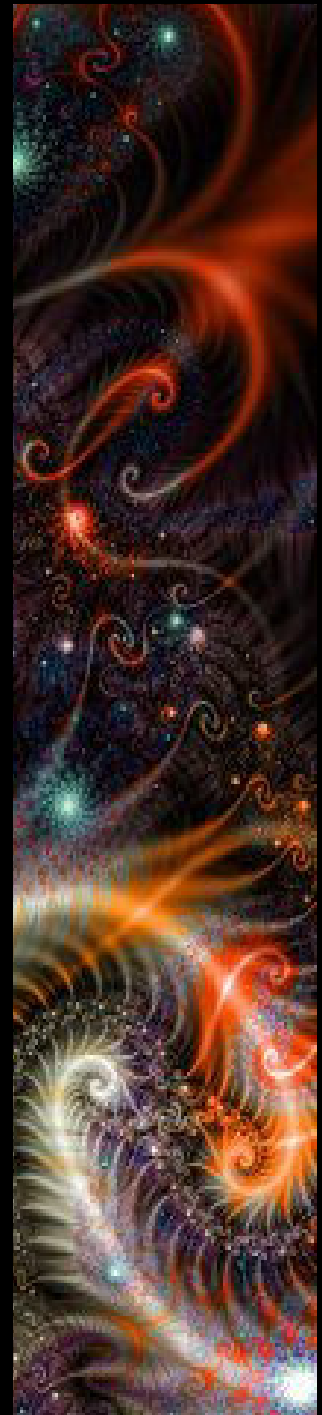


Relaxation / calmness

I was quite fed up before I started having the healing, I feel better in that way now
(Daffodil)

My life was a vast amount of stress and I didn't feel stressed to any great level
(Jasmin)

I don't get quite so stressed, I feel it has calmed the whole thing down.... It smoothes round the edges: you don't feel so raw (Rose)



Inner peace : Serenity

In fact I worked it out afterwards ... after the Spiritual healing I'd feel energised (Foxglove)

The whole process made me, or kept me serene and peaceful and able to cope with what was going on (Jasmin)

Inner peace came with the Spiritual healing (Foxglove)

I always feel elated I think I could conquer the world
(Sweetpea)

I'd say it's blissful. Absolutely blissful (Daffodil)

I felt a bit sort of uplifted (Fuchsia)



Summary

Despite the increasing survival rates

- Breast cancer is the thief of certainty
- Diagnosis and treatments rob women of physical well-being
- Fear becomes a constant companion



Spiritual Healing as a complementary therapy

- Physical - decrease or cessation of treatment side effects
- Mind - calmness
 - able to move forward
- Spirit - inner strength
 - serenity



Conclusions.....

- Spiritual healing alleviates many of the side effects of cancer treatments
- No patients took a drug holiday
- Spiritual healing as a complementary therapy can support orthodox medicine's care of cancer patients



Method – Study 2

- To generate possible questionnaire items
- Study 1 (UAI) → topic guide
- Iterative procedure incorporating member-checks
- 7 core themes with associated questionnaire items



Focus Group Findings....

- Existential Outlook
- Overall Health
- Energy Levels
- Self-Perception
- Relationship with Others
- Coping Ability
- Emotional Balance





Thinking Aloud

- To refine questionnaire items
- Focus group output → think aloud materials
- Iterative procedure testing comprehensibility & acceptability and refining wording of items generated from focus groups
- Modified wording and layout of 29 items associated with 7 themes





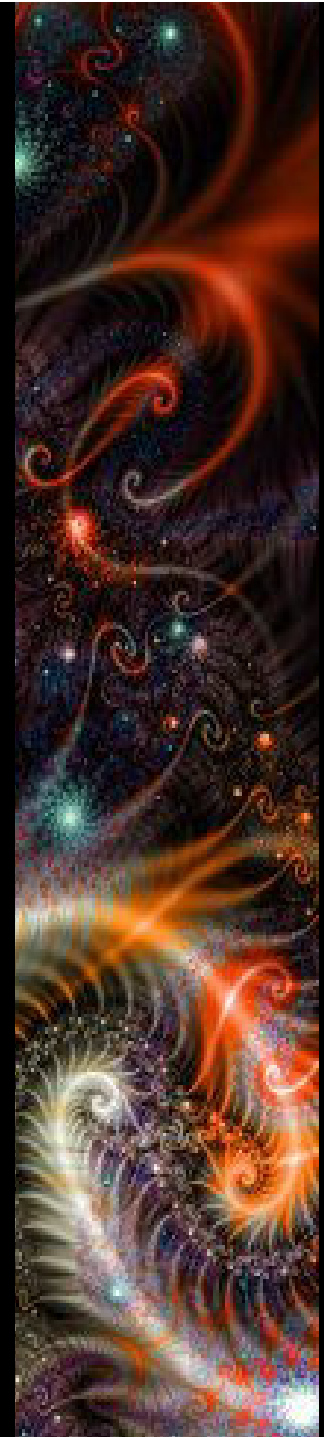
Postal Survey.....

- To test our new questionnaire's properties
- Think aloud output → testable questionnaire (HEHIQ)
- Large scale postal study involving a convenience sample of 307 healees recruited from diverse settings
- Outcome: useable & acceptable HEHIQ



Reflections...

- Each step builds on the previous step
- Member-checks give consistent perspective
-
- Focus groups bridged the 2 studies
- Multi-disciplinary team necessary & inspiring
- Quality of the final product



Results....

We have produced a sound healing impact questionnaire, acceptable to:

Healees

Healers

Researchers

Freely available in long (4 page) and brief (2 page) versions



The Development and Validation of an Outcome Measure for Spiritual Healing: A Mixed Methods Study

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Thank you.....

I
feel
honoured
to have had
your time
and attention



