

About Integrative Medicine

A Guide to Self-Care and Support | Summer 2023

CHIEF'S NOTE



Jun Mao, MD, MSCE
Chief, Integrative Medicine Service

Summer is here, and with it come opportunities to care for mind, body, and spirit wherever you go. I invite you to stay active, improve your strength, and find your inner calm through our Integrative Medicine at Home membership program. Connect with members of our integrative medicine community and take advantage of our full schedule of daily online fitness and mind-body classes.

In this issue, Dr. Kevin Liou tells us about integrative medicine at the MSK Ralph Lauren Center in Harlem and we share the importance of providing education for healthcare professionals on the latest evidence-based integrative medicine through our online courses. We also learn about a new mindfulness-based study for chronic pain – you may be eligible to join – and discover the traditional Chinese medicine herbal formula Suan Zao Ren Tang. Finally, explore our upcoming online series and workshops.

Be well,
Jun

Educating Healthcare Professionals About Integrative Medicine Through Online Courses

By Christina Seluzicki, MBE

With growing numbers of people affected by cancer exploring integrative medicine treatments, it is essential that their care teams are educated about the latest evidence for these therapies. The Integrative Medicine Service (IMS) is dedicated to providing healthcare professionals worldwide with access to high-quality learning opportunities in integrative medicine.



We offer a wide range of online courses in a variety of areas from acupuncture to yoga to herbal medicine. Many of these courses are in partnership with the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM) and other organizations that provide continuing education credit for course completion. Here are a few course highlights:

- **NEW! Herbal Formulations in Cancer Supportive Care:** In our newest course, learners explore six traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) herbal formulations that may help people with cancer manage some of the common symptoms they experience.
- **Fundamentals of Integrative Oncology:** Clinicians study the current evidence for using non-pharmacologic approaches to improve cancer-related side effects such as chronic pain, insomnia, nausea and vomiting, and stress in this fundamentals course.



- **Fundamentals of Oncology Acupuncture:** This introduction for licensed acupuncturists provides a framework for evidence-based clinical practice in cancer care and shares new advances in integrative oncology research.
- **Integrative Breast Oncology:** Clinicians learn how to communicate with patients about integrative medicine modalities and how to identify safe and supportive integrative therapies for breast cancer-related symptoms and side effects in this course.

IMS medical director, Dr. Gary Deng, says, “Integrative medicine can improve the quality of life in patients undergoing cancer treatment by addressing their

physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. Healthcare providers who understand the value of these approaches can provide better care and support for their patients. It is our goal to develop training courses that address the educational needs of evidence-based integrative medicine to improve patient care.”

You can learn more about online course offerings available for your care team of healthcare professionals on [our website](#).

New Study on Mindfulness for Chronic Pain Opens

By Karolina Bryl, PhD



Many cancer survivors experience pain related to cancer and its treatment that can last for many years. This chronic pain can lead to other bothersome symptoms such as difficulty falling asleep, anxiety, and stress that result in reduced quality of life for cancer survivors. Treatment options for chronic pain are still limited and sometimes not helpful.

Mindfulness-based approaches use mindfulness practices (for example, mindful breathing and meditation). These practices cultivate the ability to focus attention in the present moment and teach ways to relate to stressors and physical or emotional pain. They also help people to shift and re-focus their attention from pain sensations and other difficult thoughts or emotions.

A new study, Mindfulness Oriented Recovery Enhancement (MORE) Relief, is now open to

participants affected by cancer with chronic pain. This mindfulness-based program has already been proven to be effective for treating chronic pain in people who are not affected by cancer. The MORE Relief study will be the first to explore its effects on reducing chronic pain among people with cancer. Dr. Shelly Latte-Naor, MSK director of Mind-Body Medicine, says, “The emotional distress and uncertainty of a cancer diagnosis may affect how we experience pain. This study is a hopeful steppingstone to future use of mindfulness-based treatments to alleviate chronic pain in patients with cancer.”

If you have a history of cancer and have been experiencing pain for at least three months, you may be eligible to participate. The pain does not need to be related to cancer or cancer treatment. If you enroll in the study, you will be randomly assigned (like flipping a coin) to one of two groups: 1) MORE treatment group (weekly online group mindfulness-based treatments) or 2) wait list control group in which you will continue your usual care. If you are assigned to the wait list control group, you will receive one MORE treatment after your participation in the study ends.

If you are interested in learning more about this study, please contact our MORE Relief study staff at [646-608-8573](tel:646-608-8573).

Bringing Integrative Medicine to the MSK Ralph Lauren Center



Dr. Kevin Liou is an integrative medicine doctor and a licensed acupuncturist. He is dedicated to advancing the research and practice of integrative medicine to make evidence-based complementary therapies available to everyone and their communities. Here, he shares how we have been bringing integrative medicine to the MSK Ralph Lauren Center.

Tell us about the MSK Ralph Lauren Center.

The MSK Ralph Lauren Center (RLC) has been offering comprehensive cancer care to Harlem and surrounding communities since 2003. The team at RLC has cared for thousands of individuals regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds, and they are committed to making

cancer care more equitable and accessible. They reached out to us prior to the pandemic to learn more about our integrative medicine services. More recently, we decided to collaborate with the RLC team to launch a pilot program offering massage and acupuncture to patients in their chemo-infusion suites.

What integrative medicine services are available at RLC?

We currently offer ear acupuncture and massage therapy every week on Wednesdays. Our clinicians treat patients while they are receiving chemotherapy and other cancer treatments. This is similar to what we offer at other MSK chemo-infusion suites, and this pilot program will give us an opportunity to learn how to better support the patient population at RLC.

Since launching these services, we have had very high patient satisfaction and high demand. For both massage and ear acupuncture, patients have reported improvement in their pain, fatigue, anxiety, and nausea. By bringing these treatments directly to patients while they are receiving cancer treatments, we hope to

reduce barriers and make integrative medicine more accessible.

What inspired you to bring integrative medicine to RLC?

I have a background in primary care, and during residency training, I worked at a federally qualified health center that served a largely uninsured or underinsured population. At the time, I was learning acupuncture and wanted to use it to help my patients, but I encountered a lot of barriers when I tried to set up acupuncture services in this under-resourced setting. These experiences have motivated me to explore ways to make integrative medicine more accessible. I'm excited to continue working with the team at RLC to bring integrative medicine to people who have historically faced more challenges accessing these types of treatments.

To learn more about the MSK RLC, visit <https://www.mskcc.org/locations/directory/ralph-lauren-center-cancer-care>

Integrative Medicine at Home Membership Program



Start your membership online today! Visit [msk.org/athome](https://www.mskcc.org/athome).

MEMBERSHIP FEES

- Monthly membership: **\$25**
- Three-month membership: **\$60**
- Six-month membership: **\$120** (includes one free workshop)

AS A MEMBER, YOU CAN ENJOY:

- › Connecting with your cancer community
- › Staying active, with guidance from MSK experts
- › Learning new skills to increase resilience and decrease stress
- › Unlimited access to daily fitness and mind-body classes
- › Dedicated website with on-demand videos to help keep you moving on your schedule
- › Discounts on our small group workshops and mind-body series

Suan Zao Ren Tang

By Jyothirmai Gubili, MS



Suan Zao Ren Tang (SZRT) is a traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) formula containing five herbs. It has

been historically used to improve sleep health and to calm the mind. SZRT is also marketed in supplemental forms that include capsules, tablets, and liquid extracts.

Available evidence suggests that SZRT is effective against insomnia. A systematic review/meta-analysis confirmed that SZRT has short-term benefits in individuals with sleep disturbance or insomnia. The improvements in sleep quality in those who took SZRT were significantly greater compared to placebo or waitlist control groups. The effects of SZRT were also comparable to a class of medication called benzodiazepines or a

psychological treatment known as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), both used to treat insomnia.

For more details about Suan Zao Ren Tang, see our [full write-up](#) on the About Herbs website or download the About Herbs app (available for Android via [Google Play](#) and iOS via the [App Store](#)SM).

Support The Donna Wilson On-Demand Fitness Library



Donna Wilson, our beloved fitness instructor, retired in June after more than 30 years at MSK. Donna’s personal motto to “keep moving” has been a source of inspiration and strength for our community. To honor this milestone in Donna’s life, we are creating The Donna Wilson On-Demand Fitness Library. Staying true to Donna’s message to “keep moving,” the library will be a resource to engage patients on the value of fitness for people impacted by cancer, with videos on preparing for surgery, going through chemotherapy and radiation, and survivorship.



To read more about Donna’s meaningful contributions to the MSK community and to make your gift in celebration of Donna’s retirement, please scan the QR code with your camera phone. Thank you in advance for helping us to honor this milestone in Donna’s life and for your kind consideration and generous support.



Upcoming Online Programming in Fall 2023

Register online today to join one of these upcoming virtual wellness programs. Scan the QR code with your phone’s camera to sign up online or call [646-449-1010](tel:646-449-1010).



Workshops: \$20 for members; \$25 regular price

Meditation series: \$125 for members; \$155 regular price

- › **Series:** Mindful Self-Compassion
Sundays, September 10 to October 22
7:00 p.m. to 8:15 p.m.

- › **Workshop:** Tai Chi and Music Therapy for Rhythm and Balance
Tuesday, September 26, 7:00 p.m. to 8:15 p.m.
- › **Workshop:** Finding Meaning Through Talk and Movement
Sunday, October 1, 1:00 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.