

About Integrative Medicine

A GUIDE TO SELF-CARE AND SUPPORT | SUMMER 2016



Jun J. Mao, MD, MSCE
Chief, Integrative Medicine Service

Welcome to the first issue of the Integrative Medicine Newsletter!

Founded in 1999, MSK's Integrative Medicine Service is a pioneer in advancing evidence-based integrative oncology. As the new chief of the service, I am excited to be working with our talented team of integrative physicians, researchers, and health experts to bring the highest quality care to patients and families impacted by cancer.

Through this newsletter, we look forward to keeping you up to date on our progress in research, education, and clinical care. In this issue, you will read about the expansion of our acupuncture clinic to West Harrison, a new research study for insomnia opening this summer, and a mindful breathing practice to help you sleep better.

Together with you, our team is dedicated to addressing the physical and emotional effects commonly experienced before, during, and after conventional cancer treatments.

Enjoy this first issue!

A CHOICE for Sleeping Well

BY CHRISTINA SELUZICKI, MEDICAL WRITER

Landmark PCORI-funded study for treatment of insomnia to open

Recent studies suggest that up to 60% of people treated for cancer experience insomnia, and that this burdensome symptom is often accompanied by pain, fatigue, depression, and anxiety. Although medications may help manage sleep difficulties, many people struggle with side effects, prefer natural approaches, or simply want to avoid adding another medication to their routine. To address these issues, we are excited to announce the opening of a new study funded by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI). CHOosing Options for Insomnia in Cancer Effectively (CHOICE) is a clinical trial to determine which of two commonly used treatments, acupuncture or cognitive behavioral therapy, is more effective for treating insomnia and other symptoms in cancer survivors.

To learn more about the CHOICE study and determine your eligibility, please call 646-888-0812 or email us at choicestudy@mskcc.org. ■

Beyond City Borders

BY LAUREN ROBINSON, EDUCATION COORDINATOR

When acupuncturist Matthew Weitzman cares for patients, he knows they have often traveled far to see him at the Bendheim Integrative Medicine Center in Manhattan. Now, this journey will be significantly shorter for many. In May, the Integrative Medicine Service partnered with MSK Westchester in West Harrison to provide acupuncture in the Regional Care Network. This expansion will allow patients to more easily access acupuncture, an effective treatment for many of the side effects that often develop after surgery or chemotherapy.



“For patients struggling with nausea, lymphedema, neuropathy, or fatigue, it can often require weekly sessions to achieve the results we want,” says Weitzman. “With this new service, we will reach patients who may not have had effective options before now.”

Within the year, Weitzman and his colleagues hope to open several clinical trials at West Harrison, offering another way for patients to access acupuncture and support Integrative Medicine's growth outside of the city.

Clinical trials completed at MSK have confirmed that acupuncture is a safe, effective option to relieve side effects of chemotherapy, as well as dry mouth, hot flashes, lymphedema, and more. ■

Growing Together

BY LAUREN ROBINSON, EDUCATION COORDINATOR

With many new faces joining our Integrative Medicine team over the past year, it was time for our doctors, researchers, clinicians, and administrative staff to gather to discuss how to elevate patient care here at MSK.

Our recent team-building retreat provided the perfect opportunity for these conversations. Over the course of the day, we focused on strategies for improving services, reaching more patients in need, and developing novel research projects.

After this invigorating day of brainstorming, our team had a chance to relax and enjoy a wonderful jazz performance by three of our multi-talented staff members, Elizabeth Childs, massage therapist; Alessandro Ricciarelli, music therapist; and Jonathan Siman, acupuncturist. ■

Breathing Practice for Improving Sleep

BY PASHA HOGAN, YOGA INSTRUCTOR

At the end of the day, it can be difficult to stop thinking about our own 'To Do' list. We can feel anxious and out of breath, which in turn leads to a restless night's sleep. Practicing a mindful breathing exercise before bed can help us fall asleep faster, and stay asleep throughout the night.

STEP 1: Lie on your bed placing your right hand on your belly and your left hand on your heart. Notice the gentle rise and fall of your body with each breath.

STEP 2: Next, bring a count to the breath: inhale to the count of four, then pause for one count.

STEP 3: Now reverse and exhale to the count of four.

STEP 4: Continue to repeat inhaling and exhaling for four counts. Imagine on every inhale you are breathing in warmth and kindness towards yourself and on every exhale you are creating more space for warmth and kindness to fill your body.

STEP 5: Now, gradually add on to the length of the exhale, adding one extra count each time:

Inhale to the count of four – pause – exhale to five

Inhale to four – pause – exhale to six

Inhale to four – pause – exhale to seven

Inhale to four – pause – exhale to eight

Repeat this cycle for at least five rounds of breathing or until you feel deeply relaxed. *Enjoy and sleep well!* ■

If you enjoy this mindful breathing practice, you may be interested in joining **Meditation 101**, a 6-week class introducing basic mind-body techniques, practices, and tools to support you in creating a personal meditation practice.

Bendheim Integrative Medicine Center

1429 First Avenue at East 74th Street

Appointments: 646-888-0800

Visit www.mskcc.org/integrativemedicine to receive our newsletter by email.



Keeping Active as We Age

BY DONNA WILSON, CLINICAL FITNESS SPECIALIST

Our bodies will never outgrow the need to exercise. In fact, our bones and muscles thrive on a healthy variety of activities. A combination of weight-training, cardiovascular, and stretching exercises is essential for healthy aging. Unfortunately, we tend to associate our later years with slowing down when this is just the time to get moving.

Starting at age 50, we lose 0.05-1% of our current muscle mass each year. With every birthday, this loss of muscle mass accelerates. As an older adult (50+), starting a small but impactful exercise routine can make a difference. MSK's Integrative Medicine Service covers all areas of physical activity — from aerobics to yoga — and offers specialized weekly group classes and personal training. It is one of the only comprehensive programs available that addresses the fitness needs of adults in active treatment for cancer and for those in the survivorship phase of care.

Adding 30 minutes of exercise five days a week can:

- decrease cancer-related fatigue
- build muscular strength
- make bones stronger
- increase balance
- regain range of motion after surgery
- improve sleep patterns
- decrease anxiety and depression
- improve body image and self-esteem

Remember, you are never too old to start moving! ■