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Herbal Remedies Use by Breast Cancer Patients in the West Bank of Palestine

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ABSTRACT

Ethnopharmacological relevance: Recent ethnopharmacological surveys showed that herbal remedies are the most preferred modality of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). In Palestine as in many other countries, herbal remedies are widely used in the treatment of many diseases.

Aim of the study: The aim of this study was to investigate the use of herbal remedies by women living with breast cancer in the West Bank of Palestine.

Methods: This study was a questionnaire based cross-sectional descriptive study on the use of herbal remedies by breast cancer patients in the West Bank. A questionnaire was distributed to 115 patients at outpatient cancer clinics in face to face interviews.

Results: The study had a response rate of 89.6%. Of all respondents, 68% were herbal remedies users. Women with breast cancer used 46 plant species belonging to 32 families. Of these, Brassicaceae and Lamiaceae were the most prevalent. Ephedra alata was the most commonly used plant species in the treatment of breast cancer. Leaves and seeds were the most commonly used parts and decoction was the most commonly used method of preparation. Herbal remedies users were more likely to use herbal remedies instead of chemotherapy. The most commonly stated reason for using herbal remedies was the belief in boosting the patient's immune system to fight cancer.

Conclusion: The use of herbal remedies is prevalent in breast cancer patients in Palestine. The use of herbal remedies was associated with educational level, time since diagnosis, type of

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