

23.

CONCURRENT USE OF UNORTHODOX AND CONVENTIONAL CANCER THERAPIES, N Zouwe (1), I. Reurink (1), N Aaronson (2), F van Dam (1,2), G Hanewald (1), P Rumke (2). University of Amsterdam, Department of Clinical Psychology (1); The Netherlands Cancer Institute (2).

The purpose of this study was to identify the following among cancer patients receiving conventional treatment: (1) the prevalence of use of unorthodox cancer therapies (UCT) and (2) the factors determining the use of such therapies. A retrospective comparative study design was used. The sample consists of 949 cancer patients attending out-patient clinics of general and academic hospitals. The prevalence of UCT usage was 9.4% for concurrent and 5.8% for former use. Socio-demographic analysis indicates that patients who use UCT were significantly younger, higher educated and had a higher income ($p < 0.05$) than non-users. Significantly more patients with advanced disease, whose treatment is palliative and whose course of disease is progressive, adopt UCT. Significantly more (ex)users than nonusers discussed UCT with members of their social network ($p < 0.001$) and perceived their family physician as being supportive of alternative therapies ($p < 0.005$). With regard to coping strategies, results indicate that (ex)users were more characterized by an action-oriented and less by a denial-like coping style than non-users. Patients who use(d) UCT were significantly more dissatisfied with physicians and medical care in general. Further multivariate analysis will focus on the relative importance of these various factors in explaining the use of UCT.