



Multiple Myeloma. Will Reflexology help??

First of all, what is Multiple Myeloma? Multiple Myeloma is a cancer of the Plasma cells in the bone marrow. It can and usually does “eat” away at your bones. MM is not curable but MM can be managed. It will most of the time go into remission but it is still there and will come back.

With MM you will have Bone Marrow Biopsies, PET scans and CT scans often to check on the addition of any “holes”. With MM you will have weakened bones, with the “holes” that MM can make. These “holes” can happen anywhere in your body. With MM, a person will notice lumps that can come out from your bones. They may not have any pain with these lumps depending on where it is located, they maybe deep inside where it does not show but you may start to have pain.

MM most always attacks the Spinal Column. Which of course can cause very painful movement or loss of movement with the limbs depending on the location of where MM has started. If it starts in the Spinal Column there most always is a surgery involved. The bones become soft and start to dissolve due to the MM “eating away” at the bone marrow. There can be extreme pain with any of the locations that MM has started in, but especially the Spinal Column, which we all know is where the nerves start.

Multiple myeloma leads to bone loss in two ways. First, multiple myeloma cells gather to form masses in the bone marrow that may disrupt the normal structure of the surrounding bone. Second, multiple myeloma cells secrete substances that interfere with the normal process of bone repair and growth.

About 85% of people with multiple myeloma have some type of bone damage (osteolytic lesions) or loss (osteoporosis). The most commonly affected areas are the spine, pelvis and rib cage.

Multiple Myeloma and Treatments

MM and the treatments for it can cause pain, fatigue and constipation, loss of appetite, and other unpleasant symptoms. Complementary treatments may help relieve these symptoms or ease the stress of living with cancer. The term “complementary” refers to treatments that are not part of standard medical care. They can include reflexology, massage therapy and acupuncture and herbal remedies.

How They Work

Complementary treatments work alongside your regular medical treatments to help you feel better and improve your quality of life. If you stop standard cancer treatment and only use alternative therapies, you could put your life at risk. Be sure to talk to your Oncologist before you start or stop any treatments that you may be taking for MM. It is a serious cancer.

Complementary treatments for Multiple Myeloma may:

- Ease cancer symptoms or drug side effects like nausea or pain
- Relieve stress and tension
- Help you sleep better
- Give you a greater sense of control over your cancer treatment and life

Reflexology is an act of applying pressure to points on the feet or hands. Ear reflexology can also be used to help with any symptoms of MM. The therapist presses on certain points on your feet to relieve symptoms like pain or nausea or just to help you relax.

Reiki is a therapy in which a practitioner holds their hands over certain places on your body while you lie still. They don't touch your body. Their hand movements are meant to channel healing energy to ease tension or pain.

Aromatherapy, or use of fragrant essential oils can go along with reflexology sessions or stand alone. It may reduce stress and anxiety or just help you relax. If your skin is sensitive due to chemotherapy or radiation, use scented candles instead of oils.

If a patient of MM wants to consider any complimentary therapies, they should first check with their Oncologist, then talk to several Certified Reflexologists to see if they understand what you are feeling, and if they know what Multiple Myeloma is.

Other helpful tips for using Reflexology for Multiple Myeloma Reflexology can help with the following:

- Lessen depression and anxiety about having MM
- Enhance immunity by stimulation lymph flow
- Improve the condition of the body's largest organ-the skin
- Increase joint flexibility
- Pump oxygen and nutrients into tissues and vital organs improving the circulation
- Paresthesia and nerve pain
- Release endorphins and amino acids that work as the body's natural pain killer
- Alleviate low back pain and improve range of motion

Multiple Myeloma is and can be a very painful cancer. I know this from personally having been diagnosed with MM in 2006. It attacked my Spine and I ended up having a major 10-hour surgery. The doctors took one of my ribs and crushed it to make a new vertebra in my T8-10. I now have many screws and one less rib. But it worked. I had 30 days of radiation to those new vertebrae and surrounding areas.

The MM came back in 2010 with a lump on my forehead. I did not hit anything so I went to my doctor and yes it was coming back. This time I went through several weeks of chemo and it was not working so I was sent to Iowa City where I went through the process of having a Bone Marrow biopsy and from that the Oncologists on my Team suggested a Stem Cell Transplant. Of course, I approved of it. I was able to use my own. I had enough good healthy cells to use which makes the process easier on the patient because your body probably won't reject them. A stem cell transplant takes approximately 10 minutes in this little bag. You can see the cells as they move down the tube going into your body once again. I must tell you that as you receive the stem cells it smells like sweet corn!! It is a strong odor but one you can tolerate.

That transplant put the MM into a so-called remission. I was feeling good and doing well until 2019. It seems to me mine comes back stronger every few years. This time it affected my right side. My spine hurt terribly and I was losing my ability to move on the right side. My doctor wanted me to come back to Iowa City immediately after a couple weeks of not being able to move because of the pain.

My husband and I loaded me up and we went. After an MRI, it had come back strong. 2 days later I had another back surgery. Another 10-hour surgery. It was attacking my C3-5. That is the reason I was unable to move my right side. The surgery was successful but I am always going to have to use a cane and hopefully not end up in a wheelchair someday. After all these years I have learned to watch for the symptoms and if I am concerned about something new, I have wonderful doctors that listen and usually I have to go up to Iowa City again. I still go every 3 months. Right now, my blood work numbers are on the good side and my PET scan was showing no new "holes". I will always have the old "holes". I do take Vitamin D3 to help strengthen my bones along with Prolia IV every 6 months.

MM can cause depression and pain but, in my life, I have chosen to live my life the best I can. I have a wonderful Lord that is with me always, even on the bad days.

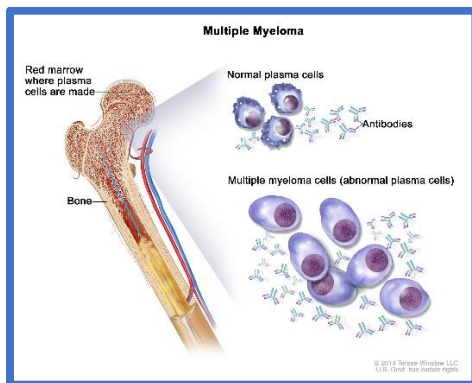
I hope this article will help you when you have a client with any type of bone cancer. MM is painful so please be careful and ask a lot of questions. As you are doing the session on your client, continually ask if your pressure is painful. Reflexology is not supposed to hurt but help!!

Blessings to you all,
Renita Murrell
President

(The following images help to explain and show what MM is.)



This photo shows where MM lesions usually start in the vertebrae.



This photo shows what MM is.



This is the Logo for Multiple Myeloma

I truly hope this helps all of you to understand Multiple Myeloma.