This article examines interest in massage therapy and other forms of complementary and alternative medicine among patients with breast disease. Surveys were mailed to 63 patients who had a breast abnormality or a recent diagnosis of breast cancer and received complimentary massage therapy at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN, from February to April 2005. Thirty-five patients responded (56% response rate). All participants felt that massage therapy was effective in helping them relax, and 34 felt that it was very or somewhat effective in reducing muscle tension. More than 75% reported that massage therapy was effective in reducing fatigue, creating a general feeling of wellness, and improving sleep quality and their ability to think clearly. Although this study was small, the findings show that massage therapy may help patients with breast disease relax and feel better overall.

At a Glance

- Patients with breast disease reported benefits from complementary massage therapy.
- Cost is a factor that negatively affects patients' interest in complementary and alternative medicine, including massage therapy.
- Massage therapy was effective in reducing fatigue and creating a general feeling of wellness, suggesting its value in helping patients cope with cancer treatment.