Oral Intake of Ginger for Chemotherapy-Induced Nausea and Vomiting Among Women With Breast Cancer

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Background: Chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting (CINV) is among the most common and distressing symptoms experienced by patients receiving cancer treatment. Nurses play a substantial role in the prevention and management of CINV. Ginger (Zingiber officinale Roscoe) is often advocated as beneficial for nausea and vomiting. Whether the herb is truly efficacious for this condition is, however, still a matter of debate.

Objectives: This experimental randomized, controlled trial was done to assess the effect of ginger on chemotherapy-related nausea and vomiting.

Methods: All patients in the study (N = 60) received standard antiemetic drugs. The patients in the study group (n = 30) also received oral ginger for the first three days of the chemotherapy cycle. No intervention was performed in the control group (n = 30) except for the routine antiemetic treatment. Nausea severity and the number of vomiting and retching episodes were measured four times each day for the first five days of the chemotherapy cycle in the patient diary. Nausea severity was evaluated using a numeric scale ranging from 0 (no nausea) to 10 (very severe nausea).

Findings: The researchers analyzed the five-day mean score of nausea severity and the number of vomiting and retching episodes. Based on this comparison, nausea severity and the number of vomiting episodes were significantly lower in the intervention group than in the control group (p > 0.05). However, the change in the number of retching episodes between the intervention and control groups was not statistically significant (p > 0.05).

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