

Unique study launched into cancer and spiritual healing

A "UNIQUE study" has been launched to see whether spiritual healing can benefit women with breast cancer, writes Tony Orzen.

It is being conducted by Fiona Barlow, a researcher with the Complementary Medicine Research Unit of the University of Southampton.

Toni Jode, who is head of healing at the world-famous Harry Edwards Sanctuary in Surrey, is one of the practitioners involved.

Writing in the Sanctuary's "The Healer" magazine, Fiona says that cancer is amongst "the most dreaded diagnoses of the modern

era and causes fear and anxiety in many who receive it.

"For women who are diagnosed with breast cancer, there is a dramatic change in life course. The diagnosis and treatments lead them onto paths they did not know and into areas where the expertise of others is needed to show the way."

Initial treatment "can include surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

"For many women, there follows a five-year course of hormonal therapies, such as Tamoxifen.

"All of these treatments can be life saving, but for many women,



FIONA BARLOW: "Spiritual healing is a comparatively neglected area of research."

of the oldest paramedical treatments," Fiona says it "is a comparatively neglected area of research.

"There are a great many stories that spiritual healing can induce relaxation, alleviate stress, anxiety and perceptions of pain, and promote feelings of well-being."

"Yet there is a call for research evidence, which is why I am working on a unique study in Southampton to see if spiritual healing can help women on their breast cancer journey. It is a very exciting piece of research."

Every Friday, Toni Jode makes a journey from the Sanctuary to Southampton to provide healing to patients, who travel from various locations.

"They share their cancer journey with me," says Fiona, a post graduate. "It is these experiences which will form the basis of my research and hopefully a large follow-up study of spiritual healing.

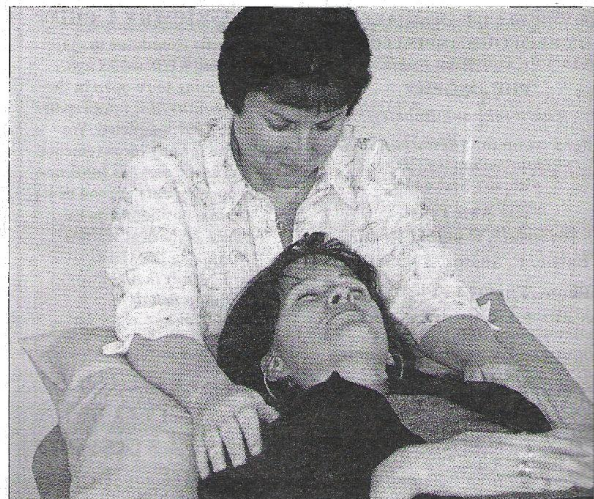
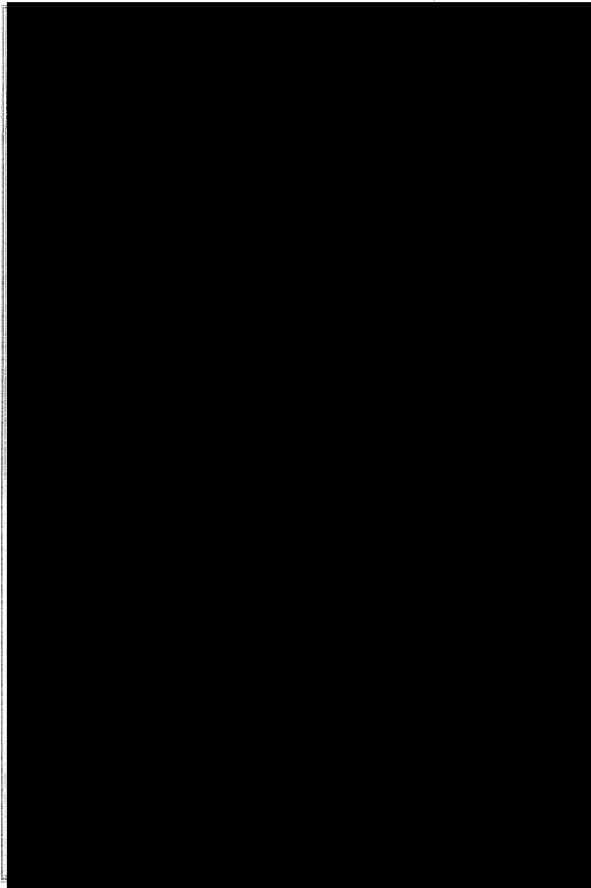
"The study is under way. Hopefully, some more women

the side effects, particularly of Tamoxifen, are very unpleasant and their path to recovery can seem a long, uphill struggle."

Fiona says that the severity of the side effects varies between women, "but for some, their quality of life is so disrupted that they admit to having a 'drug holiday,' seeking a break from the side effects by missing tablets."

Calling spiritual healing "one

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TONI JODE, head of healing at the world-famous Harry Edwards Sanctuary, is seen giving spiritual healing to a patient.

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will join us and share their experiences, helping our understanding of what it is to have life's journey diverted by cancer and its treatments, and how healing can help."

Last week, in an e-mail interview with PN, Toni Jode said she has found her involvement in the study "an interesting and enriching experience.

"The study is subject to strict protocols. The impact of the healing is being analysed from a neutral perspective."

Regarding those who visit the Sanctuary for treatment, Toni said that people "do so for a wide variety of problems and conditions. No one condition or person is regarded as any less important than another.

"Spiritual healing at the Sanctuary continues to be delivered through individual contact healing appointments and distant healing, preferably by letter, as it was in the time of Harry Edwards.

"Each letter is individually read by the healers. A reply is always given.

"Every contact – both through

visits and letters – is logged in our database. Names of those who have requested healing are entered into our distant healing book.

"Names remain in the book for a period of one month unless we are contacted again in the meantime."

The distant healing book "is the focus of the healers' daily attunement and meditations for healing.

"We believe spiritual healing is a very supportive therapy which is complementary to all forms of treatment.

"Patients are encouraged to maintain their treatments as well as to participate in the healing endeavour themselves.

"They are encouraged to do this using self-help techniques such as gentle breathing, relaxation, meditation and visualisation.

"Patients quite often attend the Sanctuary with their friends, carers, husbands and partners, who are also encouraged to have healing.

"This is something that they find beneficial as it is an experience that they can share, unlike many of the other treatments they receive for their cancer.

"It is also very supportive and beneficial to the carer, partner or family."

Toni added that for many, a visit to the Sanctuary "is more than just a 40-minute appointment for healing; it is a healing experience.

"Patients have the added advantage of being able to take time to just be in the beautiful

grounds of Burrows Lea, where they can walk or sit in the meditation glade or the serenity of the Sanctuary chapel.

"Tea and coffee facilities are available. Lunch can be booked in the restaurant if they wish to make a day of it. Again, it is an experience that can be shared or undertaken for oneself."

At the height of Harry Edwards' ministry, on average he received 10,000 letters a week.

"We now receive approximately 31-32,000 letters a year," said Toni. "We have no accurate record of the amount of letters received since the Sanctuary's inception as a running total has not been kept."

Regarding the Sanctuary's famous Healing Minute, Toni said that thousands of people join in every day.



"Again, we do not have accurate figures," she said. "We know that there are many people who are not registered with the Healing Minute who join us at 10.00 am and 10.00 pm from all over the world.

"Energetically, the concept that somewhere in the world it is 10 o'clock and that there are people linking in at that time asking for healing help for world peace and for those in need every day is quite phenomenal.

"Healers and patients in 95 countries are known to be involved world wide."

■ *The study into breast cancer and spiritual healing hopes to have 20 patients. For further details, please contact the Complementary Medicine Research Unit, University of Southampton, Aldermoor Health Centre, Aldermoor Close, Southampton SO16 5ST or e-mail jbb2@soton.ac.uk*

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