

Headed paper

Participant information sheet - Healers

Study title:

The experience of proximate spiritual healing in women with breast cancer who are receiving long term hormonal therapy

Invitation to participate in the study:

You are invited to participate in a research study. Before you decide whether or not you wish to do this, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, Fiona Barlow. I am undertaking this study for my PhD. You will find my contact details at the end of this information sheet. Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the study?

The aim of this research is to find out if one-to-one healing can offer any benefits for people who are receiving long term medical treatments such as the hormone therapy.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you are a healer whose practice conforms to the standard defined in the National Occupational Standards, drafted by the UK Healers under the guidance of Skills for Health, and have a minimum of two years healing experience.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part please keep this information sheet. You will be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

What will happen if I decide to take part?

If you respond using the enclosed form, I will arrange to meet you in the Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Facility at Southampton General Hospital where the study will take place. At this visit, the details of the study will be explained and you will see where healing will take place. You will be asked to sign the consent form.

The study requires you to provide spiritual healing to volunteer patients who are receiving long-term preventive treatment at Southampton General Hospital. Healing sessions will follow the guidelines of normal healing practice as outlined in the Harry Edwards Healing Sanctuary Code of Conduct, which incorporates the UK Healers Code of Conduct.

Patients will be able to book up to 10 healing sessions, free of charge, at the Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Facility. Each session will last approximately 40 minutes. Ideally,

each session will be video-recorded to provide an exact record for our analysis. You will be able to view this if you wish. If either you or the patient are not happy with the idea of recording, a chaperone will attend each session. I will attend some sessions to record my own observations.

At the end a session, I may invite you to spend a little time talking about the healing session. I would like to tape-record this conversation if you are happy for me to do so.

Patients will also be invited separately to spend a little time talking about their experience and impressions of the session. They will also be given a daily log to jot down any thoughts, sensations and feelings they have between healing sessions. These will help to document any changes that take place over time.

After the final session, patients will be interviewed to record their reflections on the experience of receiving healing. A copy of the patient information sheet is enclosed for you to read.

Following a series of healing sessions, I and my supervisors will invite all of the healers to a group session to discuss their experience of healing in this context with this patient group. This discussion will be tape-recorded for the analysis.

All of the information collected will be analysed to identify common threads in responses to healing that will help us to understand what is happening and the affects of healing for individuals

What are the benefits of taking part?

There are no benefits for you personally, but we anticipate the findings will contribute to the rather sparse body of scientific knowledge about spiritual healing.

Are there any disadvantages to taking part?

Taking part in the study will take up your valuable time. The study may cause you to reflect on experiences that you find upsetting. If this does happen, I will do my best to ensure that you are properly supported and given information that will provide you with long term help and support if you need it.

Will the information I provide be kept confidential?

The video-tapes of the healing sessions will be viewed in private only by myself and members of my supervisory team for the purposes of the analysis. All information in the form of tapes and transcripts collected as part of this study will be seen only by myself and my supervisors and where requested, university research auditors. All of the tapes and information will be coded (referred to only by a number) and kept in a locked cabinet in my office. The code-breaker will be kept locked separately. After the study is finished, all of this material will be locked securely in the research office for 10 years (we are not allowed to destroy the data in case there are any future queries about the conduct of the research).

As we sift and analyse the information, we will take steps to protect identities by

changing names, locations and other significant information. You will have the opportunity to review this and ensure that you are happy with this process, before we share the findings with others.

I recognise that this study will generate a lot of information (video, audio and written) that I may not be able to fully analyse as part of my PhD. At the end of the study, I will ask for your consent to share this with other academics for research purposes.

When I come to present the study to a wider audience, for example at conferences, it may be helpful to support the research findings with personally identifiable video images and/or audio extracts. I will ask you for your consent for this at the end of the study, once you are fully aware of the content. Please be reassured that I will not release any personal information without your signed consent, which you will be under no pressure or obligation to give.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

I will write up the findings in my PhD thesis as well as for publication in medical journals and journals that specialise in complementary therapies. It is anticipated that the findings of this study will contribute to a larger study to test the effects of healing.

Who is funding the research?

The research is funded by The Harry Edwards Healing Sanctuary. This study is conducted independently by Fiona Barlow.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed by academics from the National Cancer Research Institute, the University of Southampton Cancer Sciences Protocol Review Committee, and the Central Office for Research at the Southampton University Hospitals Trust. It has also been reviewed by the Harry Edwards Healing Sanctuary.

Contact for further information

If you have any further questions, please contact Fiona Barlow on [number to be confirmed]

Thank you for reading this information sheet.