

**QIGONG IN PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS IN CANCER PATIENTS: AN EXPERIENCE IN
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CANCER RESEARCH (I.S.T.) OF GENOA-ITALY:
PRELIMINARY DATA**

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The effect of cancer and its treatments on the quality of life have been described by several authors. Important physical discomfort and social and psychological trauma are often present in patients with cancer. Particularly the psychological distress may start from the moment the patients receive the diagnosis of cancer. Issues as cancer site, stage, prognosis, symptoms, type of treatment, disability, disfiguring body changes, loss of function and rehabilitation available play an important role in the patients' emotional state.

In this light, in January 1995 we started a study to evaluate the effect of Qigong on psychological distress in patients with cancer diagnosis. Sixty patients were enrolled in the study, all females; the mean age was 50.76 (range 39-75). The patients were divided into 3 groups of 20 and they performed Qigong basic exercises two hours, once a week, over a 3 months period, under the control of a medical doctor and a Qigong teacher. Furthermore the patients were instructed to practice every day the same exercises at home.

The P. D. I. (Psychological Distress Inventory) was administered to each patient before and after the Qigong cycle by psychologists.

The study is on going. Thirty patients are still evaluable for response to treatment. We have observed a good response to Qigong in terms of psychological distress improvement in 13 patients (43%) and a significant decrease of the median psychological distress level.

Our preliminary data suggest that Qigong may play a possible role as a rehabilitation therapy for cancer patients. A definitive analysis will be available in August. At the moment we are considering the Qigong as treatment for quality of life improvement should be prolonged compared to today's schedule.