

THE MATCH STUDY NEWSLETTER

June 2017 | Issue 1



WHY AM I GETTING THIS NEWSLETTER?

You are receiving this newsletter because you are either a participant in the MATCH study or you signed up for the newsletter on the MATCH website (www.theMATCHstudy.ca).

The purpose of the newsletter is to keep you informed about the progress of the study, any results we publish or presentations we give about the study, and to provide information and links you might find interesting.

If you would rather not get this newsletter, just let us know at: Mia.Koegler@albertahealthservices.ca

STUDY OVERVIEW



The MATCH Study: Mindfulness And Tai chi for Cancer Health. This innovative clinical trial is being conducted by the University of Calgary/Tom Baker Cancer Centre in Calgary and the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre in Toronto.

As a participant you get to choose which treatment you want or let us assign you to a group if you are equally interested in both.

Participants attend a series of group classes in either tai chi/qigong or mindfulness over 3-months.

We will measure program effects on psychological, physical and biological outcomes including quality of life, mood, stress, balance, blood pressure, heart rate, immune function and more.

This study will be the largest ever conducted on mindfulness-meditation and tai chi/qigong aiming to answer the question: *Which therapy works best for whom and for treating which symptoms?*

For more information visit our website: www.thematchstudy.ca

"The authors are to be commended on their "outside of the box" thinking and application of innovative approaches" – Anonymous Journal Reviewer

Meet the Team: Dr. Linda Carlson, Ph.D., R.Psych

Dr. Linda Carlson is the Principal Investigator for the MATCH study. She holds the Enbridge Research Chair in Psychosocial Oncology, is an Alberta Innovates-Health Solutions Health Scholar, Full Professor in Psychosocial Oncology in the Department of Oncology, Cumming School of Medicine at the University of Calgary, and Adjunct Professor in the Department of Psychology. She is the Director of Research and works as a Clinical Psychologist at the Department of Psychosocial Resources at the Tom Baker Cancer Centre.

Dr. Carlson's research in Mindfulness-Based Cancer Recovery and mind-body therapies has been published in many high-impact journals and book chapters, and she published a patient manual in 2010 with Michael Speca entitled: Mindfulness-Based Cancer Recovery: A

step-by-step MBSR approach to help you cope with treatment and reclaim your life, in addition to a professional training manual in 2009 with Shauna Shapiro entitled The Art and Science of Mindfulness: Integrating mindfulness into psychology and the helping professions. She has published over 150 research papers and book chapters in the area of psycho-oncology, been awarded many national and international research awards, holds several millions of dollars in grant funding and is regularly invited to present her work at international conferences.



TAI CHI AND QIGONG

Tai chi (pronounced 'tai chee') and qigong (pronounced 'chee kung') are two increasingly popular mind-body exercises that show great promise in addressing a broad range of factors that are central to supportive cancer care.

Tai chi and qigong share a common history that integrates elements of traditional Chinese medicine, martial arts conditioning, and Asian lifestyle philosophy. Both incorporate elements of slow gentle movement, breath training, and a number of cognitive skills including heightened body awareness, relaxed but focused mental attention, and imagery.

A growing number of studies support that tai chi and qigong positively impact the health and wellbeing of cancer survivors.

Studies of breast and prostate cancer survivors have consistently shown improvements in fatigue, emotional distress, depression, sleep behavior and overall quality of life. A broader range of studies shows that tai chi and qigong can greatly improve balance and strength, and also preserve cognitive function, but these studies have not focused on people with cancer. Finally, physiological research is also beginning to show how tai chi and qigong might positively influence the health of cancer survivors, with evidence that these practices positively impact underlying imbalances in the body's immune system that lead to chronic inflammation.



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We appreciate your commitment to the MATCH Study and will be sending study participants a token of our appreciation in the next few months – stay tuned!

MINDFULNESS

Simply put, mindfulness is learning to be aware in the present moment with a non-judgmental attitude. It's about paying kind attention to your experience as it is unfolding in the moment, with acceptance and ease. There is no rushing, no striving or grasping and no trying to make the experience be something it is not.

When you learn to practice mindfulness, in those moments when you can just pay attention to and accept the moment, it can be very calm and peaceful. Or maybe not. Even if your moment is filled with doubt, fear or sadness, being present for it is better than neglecting it, distracting yourself from it or dwelling in past wrongdoings and future worry.

HOW CAN MINDFULNESS HELP WHEN GOING THROUGH CANCER?

Thousands of people with cancer and their loved ones who have taken our 8-week Mindfulness-Based Cancer Recovery training program (and many more who have learned mindfulness meditation in other ways) have reported feeling less angry, anxious, worried, depressed and stressed out. They sleep better, have more energy and feel more at peace with their situation. Why?

They tell us facing their problems in meditation practice with acceptance allows learning to relate to thoughts and emotions in a different, less reactive, way. They have control over when and how to look at their fears, and how to respond to life's challenges. Life will unfold around you in unpredictable and often beautiful ways, if you are simply there to allow it.



YOUR STORY HERE

We want to hear from YOU! If you've participated in the MATCH study and would like to share your story, let us know! We will feature participant stories in future news-

letters, on our websites and social media. Nothing is more powerful to potential participants, funders and the general public than hearing about your experience.

Please contact Mia Koegler at mia.koegler@albertahealthservices.ca



MATCH Study Presentations

We have been hard at work promoting the MATCH study in a variety of academic and public talks. Here are a few:

1. **Carlson, L.E.** Mindfulness-Based Interventions in Oncology: from the MINDSET trial to MATCH. The International Conference on the Evidence of Non-Pharmacological Interventions' Efficacy. May 18-20, 2017. Montpellier, France.
2. **Carlson, L.E.** Mindfulness training for physical and mental wellness. A Mindful Society conference. April 21-23, 2017. Toronto, Canada.
3. **Carlson, L.E.** Invited pre-conference workshop: Mindfulness-Based Cancer Recovery. Society for Integrative Oncology, Miami, FL, Nov 5th, 2016.
4. **Carlson, L.E.** Invited Workshop. Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology. Mindfulness-Based Cancer Recovery Workshop. Oct 20th, 2016. Calgary, Alberta.

THE ONLY BAD DATA IS MISSING DATA!

We can't do this without you! Everyone who has signed up for the MATCH Study is so valuable to us. We need every bit of your data to be able to better understand the effects of these programs for cancer survivors. While it might seem a bit tedious to fill out those questionnaires yet again, we need you to complete these every time to fully understand the impact of the programs. The same goes for blood and saliva samples. Without those we don't know what the effects of the programs might be inside your body. The funders have put almost \$2 Million dollars into this study and we can't answer the fascinating questions about the effects of mind-body therapies on stress hormones, immune function and gene activity without those samples! Even if you didn't attend all the classes, we can take that into account when analyzing your data. Remember, the only bad data is missing data!



Please send any feedback regarding the contents of this newsletter to Mia Koegler at Mia.Koegler@albertahealthservices.ca