

## Bringing peace and relaxation during cancer treatment

Story by UK HealthCare

The moment you walk into the Jin Shin Jyutsu treatment room at Markey, you feel different. Calmer. Relaxed.

The room is darkened, but soft light streams in through the large stained-glass window on the wall. Soothing music plays lightly in the background. Patients coming in to experience a treatment session are asked to take off their shoes, lie back and relax on a soft bed.



Then, using a gentle touch, Markey's Jin Shin Jyutsu practitioner Jennifer Bradley applies a series of "holds" on her patients, looking for energy blocks that may be causing discomfort. The sessions last about an hour, during which time Bradley works her magic while the patient rests and re-energizes.

Jin Shin Jyutsu is an energy harmonizing modality similar to acupuncture in philosophy and practice, except that there is little or no pressure applied. Through a generous grant from the Lexington Cancer Foundation, this practice is currently being researched at Markey to determine whether it can help cancer patients experiencing some of the more unpleasant side effects of treatment, such as fatigue, pain and nausea.

Though the research is ongoing, Bradley says she's already learned how beneficial treatment sessions have been for Markey patients. Bradley asks each patient to fill out a questionnaire about current symptoms before and after a session, and says that nearly all her patients have reported fewer side effects following a session with her.

"Using a one-to-ten scale, our study measures a patient's pain, nausea and stress before and after their Jin Shin Jyutsu treatment," Bradley said. "So far, I'm happy to report that it is rare if a patient doesn't have a decrease in the level of these symptoms, and many have been dramatic."

Anne Leader, a stage IV breast cancer patient from Georgetown, Ky., didn't need much convincing to try a session with Bradley. The 62-year-old artist says that holistic medicine has always been a part of her worldview, and she is using Jin Shin Jyutsu after a "minimalist treatment" of chemotherapy and Femara. Leader, who takes a low dose of extended-release morphine sulfate daily for pain, found that she was completely pain-free for three days following her most recent Jin Shin Jyutsu session with Bradley. Not only that, but she said the sessions have helped calm the angry, frantic feelings she was experiencing about her diagnosis. "Cancer makes you feel as if your body is your enemy," Leader said. "So to spend an hour with your body – not your enemy – is an amazing experience."

Brenda Gardner, a fellow breast cancer patient at Markey, agrees. Diagnosed with a rare, invasive form of breast cancer, Gardner has endured a double mastectomy and currently takes Tamoxifen, which causes side effects including joint pain. "The pain moves around," Gardner said. "This week, it'll be in my shoulder. Next week, it might be in my knees." Gardner's physician, Dr. Mara Chambers, then referred her to Bradley for a Jin Shin Jyutsu session. The difference, she says, was night and day. "The very first time I went, I got such immediate relief, it was unbelievable," Gardner said. "My pain – if it was a 10, it dropped down to about a three."

Bradley, who has been practicing Jin Shin Jyutsu for more than eight years, says she hasn't been surprised by the positive results. In 2001, her sister underwent treatment for breast cancer in California, visiting a Jin Shin Jyutsu practitioner to help her with the effects of a heavy chemotherapy regime.

"My mother would take my sister for her Jin Shin Jyutsu sessions and call me afterwards in amazement at the dramatic difference in my sister's nausea, fatigue and outlook," Bradley said. "I was hooked. I had to learn more about the treatment she was using. It is now my passion, and I am grateful that I can offer patients the same comfort that my sister received."

Meanwhile, Leader and Gardner have nothing but praise for Bradley and the program. "You do not ever feel like you're a burden to Jennifer. It's like you're a gift," Gardner said. "In fact, everyone at Markey treats me that way."