

news & resources

Mistletoe Injections Help Breast Cancer Patients in Large Clinical Trial

A large-scale clinical trial confirms significant benefits among breast cancer patients from injections of mistletoe extract (Iscador). In a report published early this year in *Family Practice News* (February 1, 2003), research by Paul R. Bock, MD, Institute for Applied Medicine and Medical Statistics in Basel, Switzerland, showed that patients had fewer treatment side effects, fewer disease symptoms, and longer survival without tumor recurrence than those not receiving Iscador injections.

The trial included 1,442 patients who had undergone surgery for early stage breast cancer and were then subsequently treated with either radiation, chemotherapy or hormone therapy—all with or without subcutaneous injections of Iscador. Patients were followed for five years. Among the 710 who did receive the injections, 16% experienced adverse events associated with treatment as compared with 54% of the 732 remaining patients. Dr. Bock characterized the difference as “huge.”

Significant reductions were seen in adverse reactions typical for radiation and chemotherapy in the central nervous system, mucosal membranes and skin. Also, disease symptom relief, tumor-free survival (risk reduced by 80%) and Karnofsky index (a measure of overall status) were all better among Iscador-treated patients.

Mild systemic reactions to the Iscador injections were

reported in 0.8% of patients and local reactions were reported in 17.3%. Dr. Bock's multicenter trial results were reported at a symposium on alternative and complementary therapies sponsored by the Exeter and Plymouth Universities.

Mistletoe

Mistletoes are semi-parasitic plants that grow on other plants. They draw water and mineral salts from their hosts and carry out photosynthesis, producing carbohydrates that are full of energy. Several hundred species of mistletoe, which grows mainly in tropical and subtropical climates, exhibit great variation in forms, leaves, flowers and berries.

Extracts of mistletoe used in the treatment of cancer come from the one species that grows wild in Central Europe. It grows very slowly, taking up to 20 years to reach full development. A fully grown plant is a spherical evergreen bush one meter in diameter, with white berries. It is harvested from trees, mostly in France, twice a year. A sap is made from all the parts of the plant under rigorously controlled conditions. Mistletoe is now also being cultivated.

Mistletoe has been used medicinally since ancient times. In the early 1920s Rudolf Steiner suggested its usefulness in the treatment of cancer. Its use has increased greatly in recent years. In Germany over 60 percent of cancer patients use mistletoe, usually in conjunction with other medicines and treatments. *Courtesy Weleda USA.*

Champlain Center for Natural Medicine

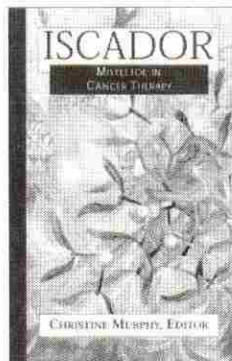
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Iscador: Mistletoe and Cancer Therapy

In this book, Christine Murphy gathers together some of the work of doctors and clinicians who have been using Iscador. Dr. Richard Wagner, a German physician, answers many of the questions about Iscador asked him by his patients during his many years of practice as an oncologist in general practice, treating cancer patients with both conventional and alternative therapies. Dr. Thomas Schuerholz, a medical doctor specializing in cancer,

offers an overview of the terms, procedures, and different approaches to cancer. *Lantern Books, 2001.*

