

# This IV Treatment for Tumors Shows Promise

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## STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › Cancer treatment is an expanding and lucrative health care sector. One 2023 study using patients with advanced cancer and treatment-resistant tumors supports findings from the past 100 years of using mistletoe in cancer treatment, improving quality of life and disease control
- › The focus of the study was to evaluate the safety profile of mistletoe in patients who were "heavily pretreated" with at least one, and up to six, lines of chemotherapy, analyzing adverse events, disease stability and median quality of life
- › Mistletoe is a semi-parasitic plant that grows on the branches of trees throughout the world, most commonly oak, pine, elm and apple trees. For centuries it's been used in traditional medicine to treat menopausal symptoms, seizures, poisons, ulcers and headache
- › A leading resource to learn more about how mistletoe is successfully used in cancer treatment is Dr. Nasha Winters, who is an integrative oncologist and teaches health care practitioners how to use mistletoe in cancer treatment through the Physicians' Association for Anthroposophic Medicine (PAAM)

Cancer treatment is an expanding and lucrative health care sector with scientists studying an ever-growing list of natural treatments. One such study<sup>1</sup> documented improved quality of life and some disease control with IV administration of mistletoe extract.

Many of the current medical treatments for cancer have significant side effects and may quicken death. A British paper<sup>2</sup> suggested that chemotherapy causes or speeds death in 27% of cancer patients. The data also showed that 43% of the patients experienced significant toxicity and 19% of patients who died from chemotherapy should not have been receiving treatment.

Other cancer treatments also have significant side effects, including radiation therapy, surgery, hormone therapy and stem cell transplants. On the other hand, natural treatment therapies, such as mistletoe extract, can help improve outcomes without dangerous adverse events, potentially helping the American Cancer Society's<sup>3</sup> estimated 1.9 million new cases of cancer in 2022.

## **Could COVID or Long COVID Increase Your Risk for Cancer?**

According to the American Cancer Society,<sup>4</sup> the estimates for 2022 were “based on incidence and mortality rates from 2018 and 2019.” They report that these numbers do not account for the unknown impact of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) on cancer diagnosis and death.

These figures also do not account for the impact that the COVID-19 jab has had on the reactivation of cancers in remission, the return of aggressive cancers and new cancer diagnoses. One paper<sup>5</sup> published in 2021 suggested that individuals who experience long-haul COVID symptoms may be predisposed to the acceleration of current cancer progression or the development of new cancer.

The researchers propose that the increased risk may be related to an increase in chronic low-grade inflammation and tissue damage triggered by long COVID, which evidence suggests is related to the spike protein that envelops the virus and not the virus itself.<sup>6,7</sup>

According to a 2023 paper in Nature Reviews Microbiology, the at-risk population may be at least 65 million people worldwide who are estimated to have long COVID.<sup>8</sup> Of course, this number is vastly underrepresented when you consider the people who have

accepted the COVID jab and subsequent production of the mRNA-directed systemic spike protein.

## **IV Mistletoe: Better Quality of Life and Some Disease Control**

Notably, the results of the featured study were obtained in patients who had advanced cancers and treatment-resistant tumors. The study was a Phase I trial<sup>9</sup> designed to determine the recommended dose of IV mistletoe Helixor M that would be used in Phase II testing.

The aim was to evaluate safety in patients with progressing solid tumors and who were “heavily pretreated” with at least one, and up to six, lines of chemotherapy. The patients received increasing doses of Helixor M three times each week and the researchers documented adverse events, changes in disease stability, target lesions, disease control rate and the median quality of life using the Functional Assessment of Cancer Therapy-General questionnaire.

The data were gathered from a small group of 21 patients, from which the researchers concluded that a 600 mg dose of mistletoe extract was effective with the lowest risk of adverse events. Patients were followed for a median of 15.3 weeks.

While the primary goal of the study was to identify the dose of mistletoe extract that could be used to test for effectiveness, the researchers did note cancer stabilized in five patients for an average of 15 weeks. In three patients, the tumors reduced in size, which stayed stable for two to five months.

The most common side effects the patients reported were chills, nausea and fatigue, which the patients also reported were manageable. Importantly, the patients also reported an improvement in quality of life, which the researchers theorized could positively impact the length of time patients could tolerate their chemotherapy treatments.

Channing Paller, associate professor of oncology from Johns Hopkins Kimmel Cancer Center, commented in a press release that Phase II studies in combination with

chemotherapy would be the next step since:<sup>10</sup>

*"Intravenous mistletoe demonstrated manageable toxicities with disease control and improved quality of life in this group of patients, who had already received multiple cancer therapies."*

## **History of the Mistletoe Plant**

Mistletoe is a semi-parasitic plant that grows on the branches of trees all over the world, most commonly oak, pine, elm and apple.<sup>11</sup> For centuries it's been used in traditional medicine to treat menopausal symptoms, seizures and headaches. Roman naturalist Pliny the Elder noted that it could be used against poisons, epilepsy and ulcers.<sup>12</sup>

It was the Celtic Druids of the first century that likely began using mistletoe in the hope of restoring fertility since they noted it could blossom during the winter months. The association with fertility and vitality continued and in the 18th century, it was incorporated into Christmas celebrations or kissing under the mistletoe.

European mistletoe (*Viscum album*) is also commonly used as an adjunctive treatment for cancer outside the U.S. The National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health<sup>13</sup> reports that in Europe, extracts are given by injection and may also be taken by mouth as a dietary supplement.

A 2014 paper<sup>14</sup> published in Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine noted that by 2017 mistletoe would have historically been used for 100 years in the treatment of cancer. It was first recorded by Dutch physician Ita Wegman, who used it to treat breast cancer.<sup>15</sup> In recent years, the number and quality of studies have grown reporting improved patient outcomes when administered with chemotherapy to help reduce adverse effects.

## **Mistletoe Extract in Cancer Treatment**

Based solely on the numbers, it's likely most people either have a personal experience with or know someone who has had cancer. Emerging data show the development of cancer is not a genetic problem but, rather, a metabolic disease primarily rooted in mitochondrial dysfunction.

One of the major concerns with chemotherapy used to treat cancer is the indiscriminate toxicity that poisons your body systematically in an attempt to kill cancer cells. There are also signs the treatment options cause more harm than good. For example, the hormone therapy drug tamoxifen<sup>16</sup> used to treat breast cancer may reduce the risk of breast cancer but elevates the incidence and mortality risk of uterine cancer.

According to the National Cancer Institute,<sup>17</sup> mistletoe extracts are among the most widely studied alternative and complementary medical therapies for cancer. And in Europe, they are among the most prescribed drugs for cancer. Currently, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has not approved mistletoe extracts to treat any condition.

A search on ClinicalTrials.gov<sup>18</sup> for Helixor M, one formulation of mistletoe extract, returns results for nine studies investigating mistletoe extract for several types of cancer including unspecified solid tumors, bladder cancer, osteogenic sarcoma, pancreatic cancer and colorectal cancer.

Suzanne Somers, an American actress best known for the role she played in the sitcom "Three's Company," is also an author, singer, businesswoman and health spokesperson who was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2001. She used mistletoe extract in the treatment of her breast cancer, which she spoke about in an interview with Yahoo! Life in 2018.<sup>19</sup>

Following a lumpectomy and radiation she opted for alternative medicine. After personal research, she chose treatment with injections of Iscador, a mistletoe extract, as well as placing a higher priority on sleep and other lifestyle choices.

## **Power of Mistletoe as an Adjunctive Cancer Therapy**

According to the National Cancer Institute,<sup>20</sup> mistletoe is a potential anticancer agent since studies have demonstrated it can kill cancer cells in lab studies, and down-regulate cell migration and invasion. Studies have also demonstrated that it supports natural killer cell-mediated tumor cell lysis and stimulates the immune system.

On a basic level, cells become cancerous when they lose the ability to die like normal cells or programmed cell death also called apoptosis. However, phytonutrients,<sup>21</sup> such as those found in mistletoe extract, have the capacity to support your immune system and restore apoptosis to cancer cells so they don't grow unchecked.

The results of a 2009 literature review of 41 studies evaluating the clinical effect of Iscador on the survival of cancer patients suggested cancer patients who used Iscador as an adjuvant treatment demonstrated better survival rates.<sup>22</sup> The National Cancer Institute<sup>23</sup> also records several human and clinical studies using a preparation of mistletoe extracts, such as Iscador or Helixor M.

Systematic reviews have found improvements in quality of life and symptom relief. Data from one review<sup>24</sup> of 26 randomized controlled trials (RCT) and 10 non-RCTs revealed mistletoe extract improved quality of life and reduced side effects of chemotherapy and radiation therapy.

Mistletoe has also been studied in terminally ill patients with pancreatic cancer, one of the most aggressive types of malignancies.<sup>25</sup> In a 2013 study<sup>26</sup> of 220 patients with locally advanced or metastatic pancreatic cancer, the patients were evenly randomized to receive *Viscum album* extract and supportive care or a control group who received no antineoplastic therapy and supportive care.

The data demonstrated the overall survival for those receiving *Viscum album* was 4.8 months and 2.7 months for patients in the control group. The researchers concluded that the intervention was “nontoxic and an effective second-line therapy that offers a prolongation of OS (overall survival) as well as less disease-related symptoms for patients with locally advanced or metastatic pancreatic cancer.”<sup>27</sup>

## More Information About Using Mistletoe Therapy

Dr. Nasha Winters is an integrative oncologist and coauthor of "Mistletoe and the Emerging Future of Integrative Oncology." Winters is herself a cancer survivor and shared her thoughts about the comprehensive strategies needed to address cancer in an [interview with me](#).<sup>28</sup>

According to Winters, mistletoe is likely to be useful as an adjunct therapy for all cancers, and she, along with several other doctors, has been training health care providers on how to use mistletoe. The good news is the number of doctors trained in this therapy is growing, and the treatment itself is only between \$200 and \$300 a month, so it's highly affordable while also being highly effective.

I think integrating this into any cancer therapy you're considering is a crucial step toward taking control of your health. However, it's important to note that oral supplementation for cancer treatment is ineffective, as the lectins responsible for the anticancer effects are broken down in your GI tract and therefore can't enter your bloodstream.

The Physicians' Association for Anthroposophic Medicine (PAAM) sponsors Winters' mistletoe training.<sup>29</sup> While many are held in person, there's also a course available online for licensed physicians. Here's a list of resources where you can find more information:

[AnthrosophicMedicine.org](#) offers articles, research, books, webinars and more. To locate a clinician trained in the proper administration of mistletoe, see PAAM's [health provider directory](#).

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Clinicians interested in training can visit the [education section](#) of PAAM's website. The next [annual training conference](#) will be held in Loveland, Colorado, April 29 through May 6, 2023.

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[Metabolic Terrain Institute of Health](#) (MTIH) is the not-for-profit association co-founded by Winters that is building a research hospital in Arizona. MTIH also offers a

master course for practitioners, and grants to help patients access these therapies. Certified practitioners can be found on [terrain.network](https://terrain.network).

These practitioners include medical doctors and oncologists who have been taught Winters' methodology of testing, assessing and treating cancer (which includes but is not limited to mistletoe therapy). MTH-certified practitioners are also listed on [DrNasha.com](https://DrNasha.com).

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[Mistletoe-therapy.org](https://mistletoe-therapy.org) is a European website that offers helpful information for patients and scientific papers directed at clinicians.

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You'll find a page of resources, including links to training, research, organizations and lab companies on the book's website: [www.themistletoebook.com](https://www.themistletoebook.com). Proceeds from this book go to fund clinical research and contribute to physician training.

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Last, but certainly not least, you'll want to pick up a copy of "[Mistletoe and the Emerging Future of Integrative Oncology](#)." It's an excellent resource that makes the information accessible to anyone interested in learning about this approach to cancer therapy and is an introductory summary of intensive professional training available through PAAM.

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## Sources and References

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