

USE OF TRADITIONAL AND COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINE AMONG NORWEGIAN CANCER PATIENTS IN THE 7th TROMSØ STUDY

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Background

Traditional and complementary medicine (T&CM) is commonly used by cancer patients in Northern Norway, in particular spiritual forms like traditional healing. T&CM is mainly used complementary to conventional cancer treatment and is rarely discussed with the patient's conventional health care providers, increasing the risk of negative interaction with conventional cancer care. The aim of this study was to investigate the use of T&CM among cancer patients in the municipality of Tromsø, and to investigate the differences in T&CM use between people living with cancer, people with cancer previously, and people without a history of cancer.

Methods

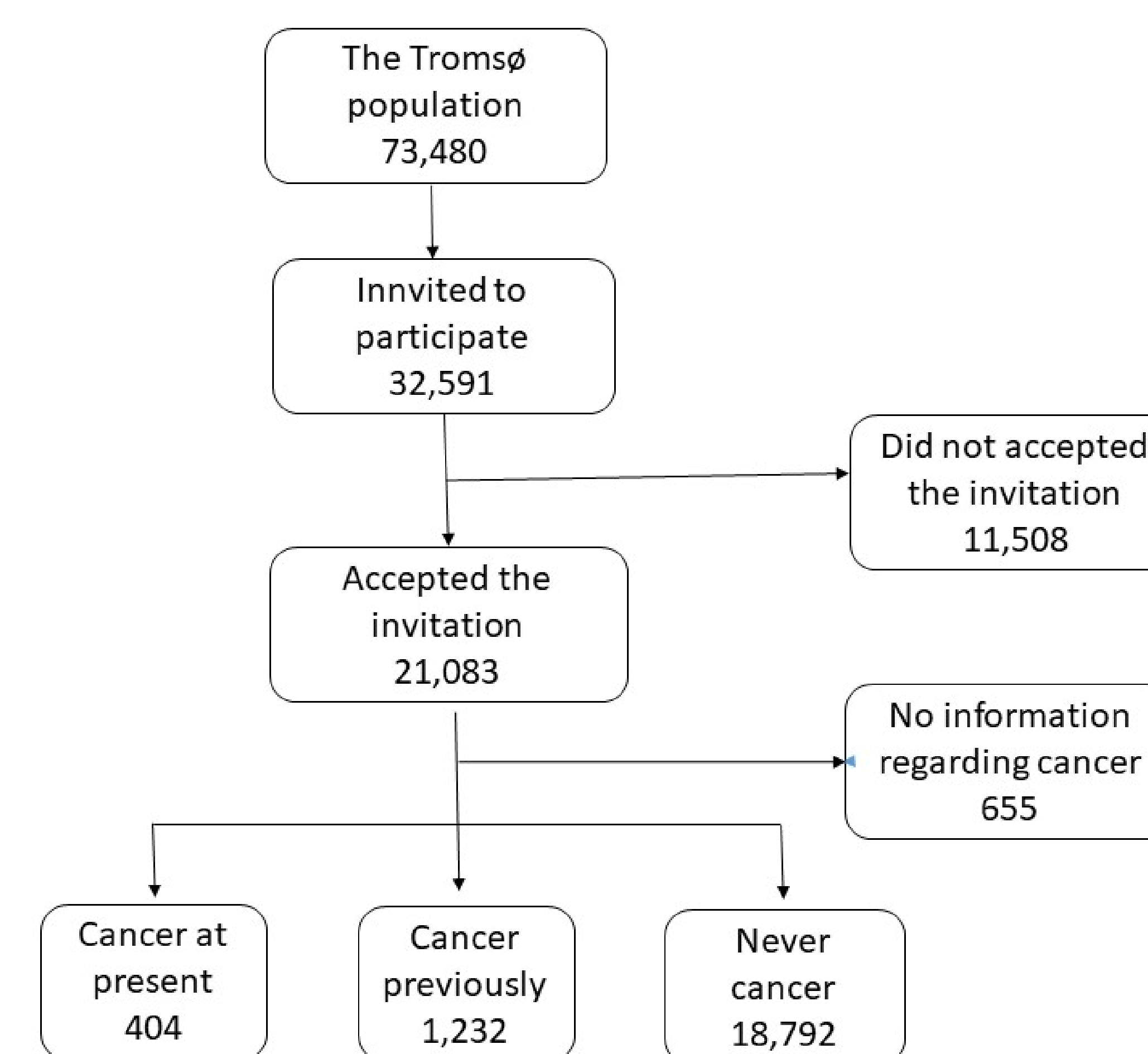
Data was drawn from the 7th Tromsø study conducted in 2015-2016. All inhabitants of Tromsø aged 40 and above were invited to participate (n=32,591) of whom n=21,083 accepted the invitation (response rate 65%). Data was collected through three self-administered questionnaires and a comprehensive clinical examination. Pearson chi-square tests and one-way ANOVA tests were used to describe differences between the groups while binary logistic regressions were used for adjusted values. .

Results

Eight percent of the population (n=1,636) reported to have (n=404) or have had (n=1,232) cancer. Of these, 33.4% reported to have used T&CM, where of 13.6% had consulted a T&CM provider, 17.9% had used herbal medicine and 6.4% had practiced self-help techniques during the last year. The participants with cancer at present were more likely to have visited a T&CM provider than participants with cancer previously (13.6% vs. 8.7%, p=0.020). Among the participants with cancer at present, 6.4% reported to have consulted a TM provider, 5.8% had consulted an acupuncturist, while 4.7% had consulted other CM providers. Women were significantly more likely than men to have used acupuncture and self-help techniques. No significant differences were found between women and men regarding visits to other CM providers, TM providers nor use of herbal medicine.



Traditional cupping with horns



Flow chart of the included participants.

Conclusion

The findings in this study suggest that both men and women in Norway use traditional medicine as a supplement to other complementary modalities outside the official health care system. As herbal medicine might interact with conventional cancer treatment, health care providers need to discuss such use with their patients.

Traditional medicine practised in Norway

The traditional medicine practiced in Northern Norway today is influenced by both Sami, Kven and Norwegian practices. Healing by prayer is used alone or in combination with tools such as herbs, water, rocks, soil, wool, and steel. One of the specialties of the traditional healers in Northern Norway is to stop bleedings. This is used when people injure themselves or when they are in hospitals suffering from bleeding after childbirth or operations Also cupping I used.