

Awareness of Complimentary and Alternative Medicine- A Cross Sectional Survey Among Pharmacists

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ABSTRACT

Aim: To determine the prevalence of complementary and alternative medicine among pharmacists. **Materials and method:** This survey was a cross sectional study. A set of 30 questionnaires containing 15 questions were given to various pharmacists of different colleges. Data were collected and statistics were done using SPSS software and represented in graph form. **Background:** Use of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) by the U.S. population increased significantly in the past 2 decades. The purpose of this study was to determine, among the Indian community, the prevalence and utilisation patterns of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), attitudes associated with CAM use and communication patterns of CAM users. **Conclusion:** The knowledge about and use of CAM is wide among pharmacists. In-depth studies on the knowledge and use of CAM among other health care professionals and among ethnic minorities are urgently needed and may help to better manage the treatment of minor disorders as well as chronic diseases.

Keywords: Complementary and alternative medicine, knowledge, awareness, pharmacist

INTRODUCTION

Complementary medicine is a treatment that are used along with standard medical treatments but are not considered to be standard treatments. Alternative medicine is a treatment that are used instead of standard medical treatments. Advances of scientific research have brought about better understanding of diseases and mechanism of action of allopathic medicines.¹ However, a good proportion of the world's population, even in developed countries, continue to depend on Complementary and alternative medicines which are a group of varying medical and health systems, practices and products not usually considered as part of conventional medicine. Some CAM therapies have undergone careful evaluation and have found to be safe and effective.² Ayurvedic and Traditional Chinese Medicine. Some important CAM disciplines as Chiropractic and Osteopathy are well regulated by Acts of Parliament but for other disciplines.³

The success or otherwise of integrating CAM and conventional medical practice into the future healthcare system worldwide largely depends on the knowledge and attitude that physicians and other health workers would have with regards to CAM.⁴ Assessing medical students' attitude towards CAM would measure the possibility of this integration since as future doctors. During the last 10 years, the use of various forms of integrative medicine by consumers has seen tremendous growth. Although

nomenclature has continued to evolve, these alternative forms of healing have been collectively referred to as complementary and alternative medicine (CAM).⁵ This included those with acute and chronic illnesses. Attitudes and practice concerning complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) are currently an area of considerable importance. However, little is known about the overall importance of CAM in groups of health care professionals.⁶ Therefore, the primary objective of the study was to analyse the knowledge about and use of CAM Among pharmacists.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

This survey was a cross sectional study. The questionnaire gathered information on respondents' demographic data, knowledge, attitude and usage of complementary and alternative medicine. A set of 30 questionnaires containing 15 questions were given to various pharmacists of different colleges. Data were collected and statistics were done using SPSS software and represented in graph form.

RESULT

The study is a Questionnaire type and the result of the study is based upon the peoples response about the awareness of Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). Totally 30 pharmacist were included in the study. Questions were in agree, disagree type. 20 of them agreed that CAM therapy is cost efficient and 25 participants agreed that

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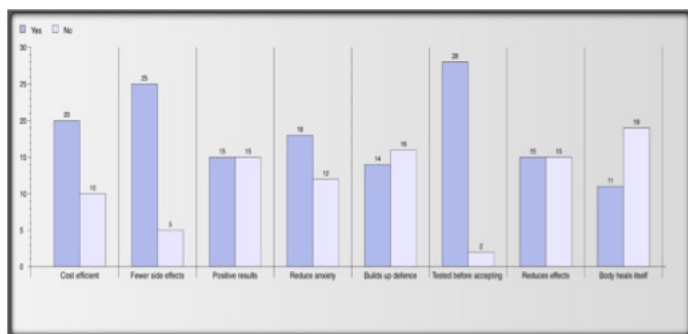


Figure 1: Graph representing the awareness of CAM

Table 1: people's response for various questions

Categories	Agree	Disagree
Cost efficient	20	10
Fewer side effects	25	5
Positive results	15	15
Reduce anxiety	18	12
Builds up body defence	14	16
Subjected more before acceptance	28	2
Reduces effects	15	15
Body heals itself	11	19

DISCUSSION

Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) covers a heterogeneous spectrum of ancient to new-age approaches that purport to prevent or treat disease.⁷ By definition, CAM practices are not part of conventional medicine because there is insufficient proof that they are safe and effective. Generally, persons who choose CAM approaches are seeking ways to improve their health and well-being or to relieve symptoms associated with chronic, even terminal, illnesses or the side effects of conventional treatments.⁸

The percentage of people using complementary and alternative medicine, According to this survey is 60% and fewer people still don't have awareness about CAM. In this few set of questions people responses towards different questions were more or less equal. Regarding the cost of cam medicine 50%of people agreed to it and rest disagreed. Asking about reducing anxiety ,has positive results to the body 50%of pharmacists strongly agreed and rest had no knowledge about it. Enquiring about

fewer side effects when compared to English medicine 75% of them agreed.

None of the was able to define modalities such as Biofeedback and Energy Medicine with 1% or less correctly. Whereas in Singapore and Pakistan, acupuncture is the best known CAM, American pharmacists consider massage, herbal medicine and meditation as their best known CAMs.⁹

The knowledge and usage of CAM among pharmacists in USA was however better than pharmacists in this study possibly due to the integration of CAM into their medical curriculum.¹⁰

CONCLUSION

Although all the CAMs listed had ever been heard of by at least one student, their overall knowledge on CAM modalities is poor. The most common CAM known by the pharmacists is Herbal medicine. Relatives and friends greatly influenced attitude towards the use of the best known CAMs especially herbal medicine

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