

Facts On Alternative Medicine: When Is It A Good Thing, And When It Should Be Avoided

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Reporting from the Philippines
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Many people change their outlook towards medical treatments and resolve to complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). To some, questions still remain on the facts on alternative medicine. Leading them to find out when is it right to use and when it should be avoided.

Experts recommend that it is vital to know the diagnosis of one's illness to determine if alternative medicine would be helpful or not. The status of one's illness best tells if alternative medicine is an effective option.

KNOW THE FACTS ON ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

People resolve to the facts on alternative medicine when all conventional treatments disappointed them. So they search for something new. Furthermore, one of the advantages of CAM is that it has a wide range of approaches, healing philosophies, and therapies.

CAM is a group of various healthcare practices, systems, and products. And these are not considered as part of the conventional medicine. There are scientific proofs that exist on some CAM therapies. But there are still some essential medical questions that need answers through well-designed and clear scientific studies.



The alternative medicine therapies are homeopathy, acupuncture, reflexology, aromatherapy, herbal remedies, hypnosis, macrobiotic diets, chelation therapy, faith healing and manipulation therapies like osteopathy and chiropractic. And many CAM therapy patients can claim that it is effective for its purpose.

But some of these questions are whether CAM therapies are safe and whether they are effective. Because of people of all backgrounds, adults, and kids alike, use CAM.

The National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health claimed that the dietary supplements (herbal medicine) are the most used CAM therapy in adults.

The use has raised for a lot of therapies including meditation, deep breathing exercises, yoga, and massage therapy. Furthermore, the report also stated that fish oil/omega 3, echinacea, glucosamine, and flaxseed are the most popular natural products.

WHEN IS ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE A GOOD THING?

The report declared that the health conditions that prompt the use of CAM therapy. Also aside from NHIS, many other studies revealed that CAM usage is most frequent among people with poorer health status from recurrent, chronic, or serious health condition. Among the examples are patients with asthma, allergies, cystic fibrosis, behavioral and developmental problems, rheumatoid arthritis, HIV infection, and the musculoskeletal problems like joint pain, back, and neck.

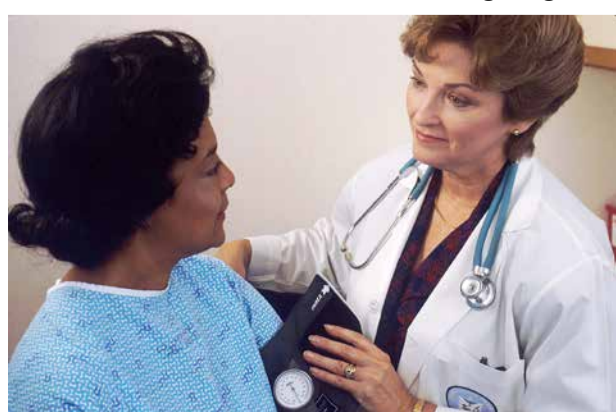
In the UK, herbal medicine lead as the top use of CAM followed by homeopathy, aromatherapy, massage, and reflexology. But among the several forms of CAM, acupuncture is among the most popular.

WHEN TO AVOID CAM?

But not all alternative medicine therapies are a good idea. Here is some information you need to know before using CAM. These following concerns should not prevent you from getting into alternative medicine. But this will provide more information in the decision-making process:

- Limited scientific research. – There is actually an increase in consumer demand so the funding for the research studies on alternative medicine is also increasing. But still, when compared with traditional medical methods, CAM is still limited. Thus left several questions unanswered.
- NCCAM recommends that you ask your primary care doctor or health care provider to learn on ongoing studies on alternative medicine. Also, you can visit the NCCAM site on their "Research" link or go to a local library or online resource about scientific journals.
- Confusing Marketing – A lot of dietary supplements and herbal remedies that fall under the alternative medicine are mislabeled as "natural". And it's easy to confuse the words "natural" and "safe". But the two are not similar even when a lot of marketers' attempt to make consumers think otherwise.
- Consider it as a red flag when a manufacturer makes unrealistic claims. Some claims that their products have "secret ingredients" or are "miracle cures".
- Possible dangerous interactions. – Even when in some cases the products contain no artificial substances, some of these natural ingredients have side effects of their own. Supplements and herbs can still possibly interact with prescription and over-the-counter medication.

Patient Info reported that patients with these conditions should avoid alternative medicine as it is going to have some side-effects. These are some of the conditions mentioned:



- Aneurysm of a major artery
- Someone who has a clotting disorder or anticoagulants
- Someone with neurological disease
- Any possible sinister cause of back pain like a history of breast cancer, a hematological malignancy or any that involve bone. And acute infection or fracture of the joints or bones involved.
- Active inflammatory arthritis
- Presence of cauda equina syndrome
- Serious Heart Conditions

When considering the facts on alternative medicine, and a basic principle of this is to think balance. You can take the best health care from both the traditional and alternative sides of medicine can be your best option.

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