



An Overview of Various Forms of Alternative Medicine in Modern Society

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Abstract

This article examines alternative medicine's function and place in modern society, as well as its concepts and types, as well as some common alternative medical treatments. Any medical treatment that is not part of traditional evidence-based medicine is referred to as alternative medicine. Alternative medicine is practised to some extent in many societies, and phrases like traditional medicine, indigenous medicine, and folk medicine are used to characterise it. Depending on the country and culture, many remedies date back hundreds or even thousands of years.

Keywords: Alternative Medicine, Modern Society, Traditional Medicine, Folk Medicine

Introduction

Although recent advancements in molecular biology and physiological chemistry have considerably improved our understanding and treatment of diseases, traditional medicine or so-called alternative medicine remains the preferred form of health care for a wide segment of the population [1].

Using alternative medicine

Alternative medicine encompasses a wide range of health-care methods, products, and therapies, as well as the theories and beliefs that accompany them, that are not inherent to the dominant health system of a given nation or culture at a given time. More than a hundred alternative medicine systems are still in use around the world. Every country, region, or area has its own traditional health and medical care system, such as acupuncture for the Chinese, magnetic healing for the French, Heilpraxis for the Germans, Herbalism for the English, Ayurveda for India with Siddha being widely practised in the southern part of the country,

Shiatsu, moxibustion (burning herbs over acupuncture points), hypnosis, and qigong (energy healing) for Japan, and so on [2].

People prefer alternative treatment over standard, conventional treatment for a variety of personal, spiritual, and physical reasons. They may have had poor experiences with conventional medicine in the past; spiritual or religious reasons; aversion to chemicals and toxins; desire for a holistic approach; and an emphasis on prevention are some of the reasons. Alternative medicine is founded on beliefs such as prevention is better than cure, achieving optimal health, treating the patient as a person rather than an illness, individualism, and drastic disease removal [3].

There are some major groups of alternative therapies:

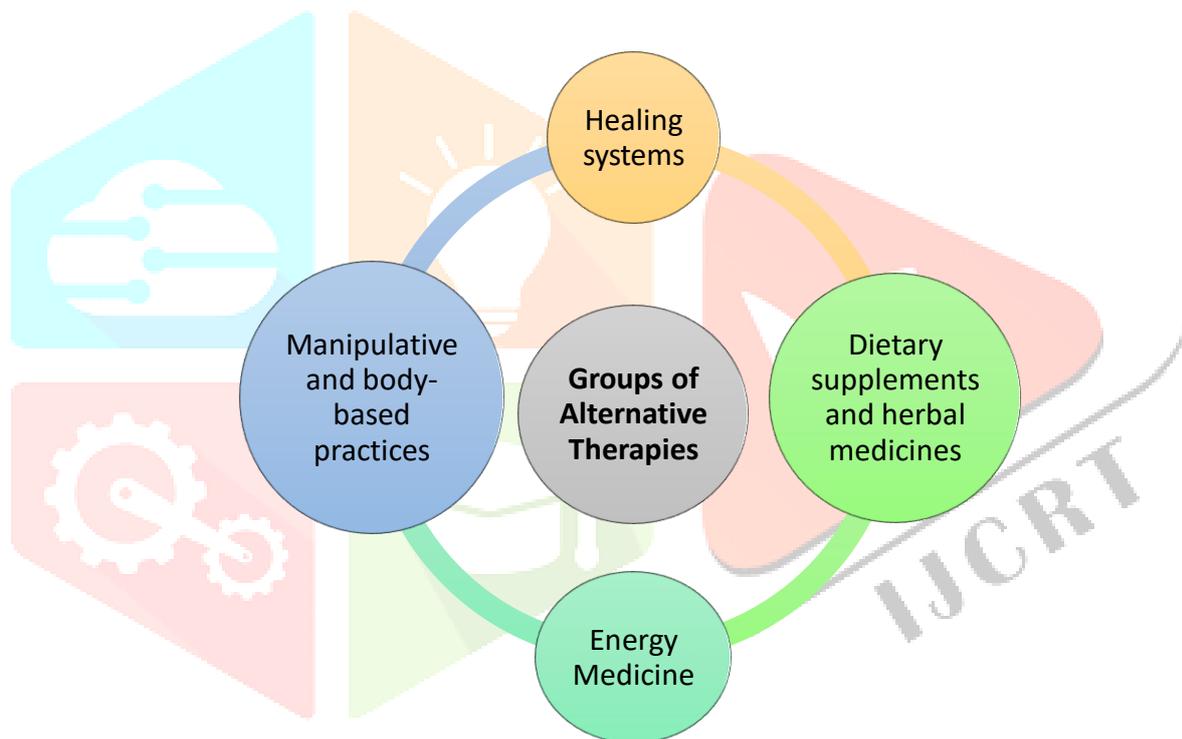


Figure 1. Major groups of alternative therapies

CAM (Complementary and alternative medicine) systems

Anthroposophical medicine, ayurveda, homoeopathy, traditional Chinese medicine, and naturopathy are comprehensive medical systems. Full systems of theory and practice that have evolved independently in diverse cultures over time and are distinct from conventional or western medicine. CAM stimulates a health promotion-oriented lifestyle (prevention) and treats patients with the goal of strengthening or supporting the human organism's self-healing or self-regulating ability to cope with diseases in daily clinical practise, based on the nonatomistic holistic worldview and related health and disease concepts [4].

1. Energy Medicine

- Biofield therapies such as Qi gong & Reiki or therapeutic touch and
- Bioelectromagnetic-based therapies such as magnetic fields

Manipulative and body-based techniques, Mind-body interventions, and Whole Medical Practices are all examples of energy medicine. Energy medicine is a branch of medicine that works with energy fields that are both speculative and verifiable (Biofield therapies such as Qi gong & Reiki or therapeutic touch and bioelectromagnetic-based therapies such as magnetic fields). These therapies are designed to unblock or rebalance your energy force [5].

2. Practices that are based on supplements

- Dietary supplements
- Herbal medicines

Dietary supplements and herbal medicines are two examples. Natural substances are used in these therapies. Ginseng, ginkgo, and echinacea are examples of herbs; selenium, glucosamine sulphate, and SAmE are examples of nutritional supplements. Herbs and supplements come in a variety of forms, including teas, oils, syrups, powders, tablets, and capsules [6].

3. Manipulative and body-based techniques

- chiropractic and osteopathic manipulation
- Massage, and acupuncture

Manipulation or movement of body parts is used in manipulative and body-based techniques such as chiropractic and osteopathic manipulation, massage, and acupuncture. Interventions involving the mind and body. Mind-body practises let you communicate more effectively with your mind, body, and spirit. Meditation, prayer, relaxation, and art therapy are examples of mind-body connection treatments. It is based on the idea that the mind has the ability to influence "bodily activities and symptoms [7].

Ancient healing systems are examples of entire medical systems.

4. Healing systems

- Reflexology
- Meditation
- Aroma-therapy
- Chromo- therapy

Ayurveda from India and traditional Chinese medicine are examples of healing systems that predate current Western medicine. Ayurveda, Homeopathy, Naturopathy, Yoga, Acupuncture, Acupressure, Magneto therapy, Shiatsu, Iridology, Reflexology, Herbalism, Meditation, Aromatherapy, Chromo therapy, Diet therapy, Massage Therapeutic, Hydrotherapy, and Reiki are the most common kinds of alternative medicine [8].

4a. Homeopathy

Auto-
isopathy

Classical
homeopathy

•Clinical
homeopathy

•Complex
homeopathy

•Homotoxicology

•Isopathy

It is a type of complementary medicine founded on ideas described by Samuel Hahnemann in 1796. A key tenet of homeopathy is that an unwell person can be treated with a substance that can elicit symptoms similar to those of the illness in a healthy person. Infertility, menstrual problems, menopause, pregnancy concerns, migraines, skin complaints, allergies, hay-fever, IBS, depression, stress, anxiety, and sleep disorders are among conditions that homeopathy can help with. Homeopathy is appropriate for all ages, including infants, children, and adults.

The theory behind this modality is that specific spots on the feet and hands correspond to organs and tissues throughout the body [9]. The practitioner administers pressure to these areas with his or her fingers and thumbs to cure a variety of stress-related diseases.

4b. Reflexology

Massage

Acupuncture

•Exercise

•Lifestyle
counselling

This strategy focuses on noninvasive treatments to assist your body in healing itself, and includes massage, acupuncture, exercise, and lifestyle counselling, among other things. (Ayurveda, homoeopathy, and naturopathic medicine are examples of traditional Chinese medicine.) Herbal-based therapies, which were long only employed in traditional medical systems, are now advised for the treatment of a variety of degenerative illnesses and chronic ailments in which modern pharmacological agents have failed [10].

4c. Ayurvedic medicine

Diet

•Herbs

A holistic system that emphasises the body, mind, and spirit, as well as using a highly customised approach to return a person to a state of harmony with their surroundings. Diet, exercise, yoga, meditation, massage, herbs, and medication are all used in Ayurvedic treatment, which, despite its long history, is as relevant now as it was 5000 years ago. Ayurveda has evolved over time and continues to be a powerful medical system in South Asia [11].

4d. Acupuncture

Traditional Chinese Medicine includes it as a major component. Fine needles are implanted at certain spots to stimulate, disseminate, and regulate essential energy flow and restore a healthy energy balance. Back pain, sciatica, muscle injuries, arthritis, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), menstrual disorders, infertility, sinusitis, asthma, hay fever, skin problems, smoking addiction, stress, exhaustion, insomnia, and migraine are among the ailments for which it is prescribed.

4e. Hydrotherapy

It is described as the use of water for medicinal reasons in a scientific manner. Water can be used at a variety of temperatures, in a variety of modes, and in a variety of shapes. It's used to treat a variety of ailments, including arthritis and rheumatic problems [12].

4f. Chiropractic

The spine is regarded by chiropractors as the backbone of human health: misalignments of the vertebrae caused by bad posture or trauma put pressure on the spinal nerve roots, resulting in reduced function and sickness. Treatment aims to analyse and fix these misalignments by manipulating or adjusting the spine [13].

4g. Reiki

Light hand placements are used by practitioners of this ancient Tibetan healing practise to send healing energies to the receiver. Reiki is commonly used to treat emotional and mental distress, as well as chronic and acute physical problems, and to assist the recipient in achieving spiritual focus and clarity. While practitioners' techniques and beliefs vary, Reiki is commonly used to treat emotional and mental distress, chronic and acute physical problems, and to assist the recipient in achieving spiritual focus and clarity [14].

Alternative medicine has sparked heated controversy, even over what constitutes alternative medicine. Alternative medicine is thought to be based on unproven, unconventional, or unscientific beliefs, practises, and treatments. However, an increasing number of individuals are turning to alternative medicine and natural healing, and some mainstream doctors are now recommending natural drugless methods to treat both minor and major ailments. As a result, complementary (alternative) medicine is frequently utilised in

conjunction with traditional (official) therapy. Alternative medicine has a number of advantages. But whether to use approved medication or alternative therapy is entirely up to you [15].

Conclusion

Accepting alternative medicine as a standard treatment option has a significant impact on the costs of health interventions, preventive medicine, and self-healing. In many developing countries, healthcare providers are confused by the seemingly contradictory behavior of patients who live between modern and traditional health services in cities. This eclectic behavior takes into account the fact that while modern medicine is effective in treating the symptoms of various human illnesses, only traditional medicine can treat illnesses with roots in modern society.

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