

Understanding Complementary and Alternative Medicine



The world is in a severe health crisis. As bacteria become resistant to antibiotics, modern lifestyles involve excessive exposure to carcinogens, and pharmaceutical compounds show more side effects than people can tolerate. There is an emerging need to change the paradigm of health and wellness.

While modern medicine has improved health and life expectancy, it sometimes fails to alleviate a patient's symptoms. In such cases, scientists are increasingly looking into complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), which includes any health practice outside of the fold of conventional medicine. This includes botanical and nutraceutical therapies, acupuncture, or going to a [chiropractor](#), among countless other treatments. Read on to find out if CAM works and if it's safe.

CAM Therapies

CAM includes various therapies, including:

Herbal Medicine

Many traditional medical dogmas, like ayurvedic medicine, rely on herbal treatments. Herbs contain many different compounds that help fight disease in the body, such as antioxidants to reduce oxidative stress that can lead to cancers and neurodegenerative disorders.

Turmeric is one of the most widely used herbal medicines. It contains curcumin, an antioxidant compound that has anti-stress and anti-cancer properties. It has been traditionally used in Ayurvedic medicine to treat various conditions, and it is believed to help reduce inflammation, alleviate joint pain, and contribute to overall well-being.

Chiropractic Care

Chiropractic care is a holistic approach that centres around the musculoskeletal system, primarily focusing on the spine. They believe that realigning the spine can alleviate most symptoms of neuromuscular and skeletomuscular disorders, such as back pain.

Chiropractic care mostly focuses on applying controlled force to specific joints, often the spine, to correct misalignments or subluxations. The goal
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is to restore proper joint mobility, alleviate pain, and enhance overall function.

Nutraceuticals

Nutraceutical compounds are dietary compounds that are used as medication. These compounds, from nutritional supplements to functional and medical foods, are designed to provide health benefits beyond essential nutrition.

One typical example of nutraceuticals is vitamin supplements. Omega-3 supplements, such as cod liver oil, are another example of nutraceuticals. Omega-3 fatty acids have antioxidant properties and are suitable for your brain's health.

Is CAM Therapy Safe and Effective?

Remember that when using complementary and alternative medicine, you should check in with your doctors first. While CAM therapies are traditionally used, some are not scientifically backed. They may be ineffective or even harmful to your health. You also need to beware of scams, as several individuals who practice complementary and alternative medicine are not licensed health professionals.

However, there is research going on into CAM therapies, and several traditional medical practices are found to be helpful. Integrating CAM practices into one's healthcare regimen should involve open communication with healthcare professionals. A collaborative approach ensures that individuals receive comprehensive, well-informed guidance tailored to their health needs.

Understanding potential interactions between CAM and conventional medical treatments is crucial for ensuring patient safety. Certain practices, such as herbal supplements or dietary interventions, may influence the effectiveness or side effects of prescribed medications. Individuals must disclose their use of CAM to their healthcare providers, enabling a comprehensive evaluation of potential interactions.

Endnote

Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) is a growing medical trend where unconventional medicine, like herbalism or chiropractic care, is used to manage medical symptoms. As conventional medicine often has undesirable side effects or fails to address some conditions effectively, interest in CAM therapies has risen.

However, remember that CAM therapies, while being valuable, are not a substitute for conventional treatments. You should consult your doctor before integrating any CAM regimen into your life.

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