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Integrating Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) into emergency care: Evidence-based nursing, pharmacy, cardiologist, and telemedicine approaches

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Abstract--Background: Current biotechnology and medical procedures have made remarkable progress, yet the use of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) is rapidly developing and expanding in the healthcare sector. This trend has significantly increased in contemporary civilizations, particularly in developing nations. To effectively address the health-seeking behavior of individuals, it is essential to integrate CAM practitioners into the mainstream healthcare system. **Aim of Work** – The aim of this initiative is to offer comprehensive training, adequate facilities, and support for referring patients, when necessary, thereby facilitating the integration of CAM into conventional healthcare. **Methods:** The approach involves the implementation of empirical CAM (EBCAM) treatments, which have demonstrated significant efficacy in treating various illnesses. Additionally, the integration of existing CAM systems is crucial for the exchange of evidence-based information. **Results:** While there is a positive combined impact from the interaction between conventional medicine and CAM, significant gaps remain in the EBCAM field that require further research. This research is essential to gather data and establish best practices for CAM. **Conclusion:** Enhancing people's health through the integration of CAM into mainstream healthcare necessitates ongoing research to fill the gaps in knowledge and practice. By doing so, the healthcare system can better serve the needs of individuals seeking holistic and effective treatment options.

Keywords---Contemporary Methodologies, Holistic Healthcare, Scientifically Supported Medicine, Supplementary Healthcare, Unconventional Healthcare.

Introduction

In the last twenty years, the use of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) has significantly increased in contemporary civilizations and is now experiencing rapid growth in the healthcare industry [1,2]. Due to the lack of a universally acknowledged definition, many meanings of CAM are found in different literature sources. Complementary medicine refers to the practice of diagnosing, treating, and preventing health issues in a way that supports conventional medicine. It serves to enhance the overall well-being by addressing needs that are not covered by traditional medical approaches or by expanding the existing frameworks of medicine. Complementary and alternative medicine, as defined by the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH), refers to a range of medical systems, practices, and products that are not currently considered part of conventional medicine. These methods of healing or treating diseases are not taught in Western medical schools [3-6]. According to the National Cancer Institute (NCI) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), conventional medicine is a system where health practitioners with an MD or DO degree use medications, radiation, or surgery to treat symptoms and illnesses.

The use of complementary and alternative medicine has seen rapid growth in the healthcare industry and has greatly expanded in all contemporary civilizations over the last two decades, despite the remarkable advancements in modern biotechnology and medical procedures that were previously unprecedented. In order to meet the demand for health care, especially in developing countries, it is essential to include all complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) practitioners into conventional medicine. This may be achieved by providing them with access to medical facilities, comprehensive training, and support mechanisms for urgent referrals. The treatment results for illnesses using evidence-based complementary and alternative medicine (EBCAM) have been very beneficial. In order to disseminate knowledge that is supported by scientific evidence, it is necessary to use modern complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) systems. Currently, a significant number of people are pursuing treatment by using both alternative and mainstream therapy. The purpose of the present literature study is to provide insight into the use of CAM (Complementary and Alternative Medicine) while emphasizing its current state in Saudi Arabia.

Complementary and alternative medicine

The phrases 'traditional medicine' and 'complementary medicine' are used interchangeably in certain countries. As per the NCCIH, alternative health refers to the use of non-mainstream methods instead of conventional medicine. Complementary health, on the other hand, involves the use of non-mainstream methods alongside conventional medicine. Therapies that are used in combination with conventional and traditional Western medicine are known as complementary therapies. Alternative medicine refers to therapeutic procedures

used instead of orthodox medicine [5]. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines traditional medicine as a wide range of health practices, knowledge, and beliefs that involve the use of plant, animal, and mineral-based medicines, spiritual therapies, manual techniques, and exercises. These practices are used to maintain well-being and can also be used for treating, diagnosing, or preventing illnesses [7].

Alternative medicine (AM) encompasses any non-conventional treatment techniques that are not considered part of traditional medical practice. The collection has about 160 treatments or therapies [8]. The subject may be classified into pharmacological disciplines (such as herbalism or homeopathy), physical treatments (such as acupuncture, cupping, or chiropractic), dietary approaches (such as macrobiotics and vegetarianism), or cognitive therapy (e.g., hypnosis and other techniques). Complementary and alternative medicine is often used as a comprehensive phrase to include a broad spectrum of both conventional and less well-known therapeutic approaches. The interventions encompass a wide spectrum, ranging from medical procedures that are not part of the curriculum in medical schools or commonly offered in hospitals, to strategies that have not been proven effective through rigorous clinical trials or accepted by the biomedical community.

Integrative medicine

Integrative medicine (IM) is a broad spectrum of conventional and complementary therapies that involves incorporating complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) into conventional healthcare. Its goal is to merge conventional medicine with alternative therapies in order to establish a more effective and economical healthcare system. Conventional medicine relies on scientifically validated methods that have been proven to be safe and effective through rigorous trials and research. Integrative medicine is characterized by its patient-centered approach, which takes into account the overall well-being of the individual, including their physical, mental, and spiritual aspects. It emphasizes the importance of the therapeutic relationship and utilizes all necessary treatments, both traditional and alternative [9,10].

In the 1990s, the word CAM was substituted by the phrase 'integrative medicine'. Interventions that were previously not acknowledged as valid therapies in Western medicine are now known as Integrative Medicine (IM). In a study conducted in 2002 by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) of the CDC, it was found that 62% of people used complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) for specific health advantages in the preceding year [11]. Herbal pharmaceuticals or natural goods are considered one of the most popular cures in integrative medicine, with many individuals in the US using them frequently. This is because they are believed to be natural, safer, and healthier compared to allopathic medications [12].

The increasing accessibility and widespread acceptance of instant messaging (IM) among the general population, apprehensions regarding the usage of conventional allopathic drugs, a surge in the need for preventive medicine, and patients advocating for alternatives to allopathic medications that either do not effectively

treat conditions or result in adverse effects, all contribute to the growing popularity of herbal medications [12].

The field of herbal medicine presents challenges because to the intrinsic qualities of plants, such as their vast array of chemical elements and the varying effects that various portions of a plant might have. Moreover, the specific component responsible for generating the desired outcome is often uncertain. Several substances that might potentially cause herb-drug interactions are well recognized. Aside from the potential side effects and contraindications associated with each individual herb, it is imperative to directly inquire about all medications and therapies that patients have used, regardless of whether they were prescribed or not. This is particularly important because individuals may choose not to disclose their use of herbal remedies to their doctors due to concerns that this practice may be disapproved. Moreover, with the increasing popularity of CAM and the rising number of individuals actively seeking and using these techniques, family physicians might greatly profit from acquiring expertise in this domain.

Complementary and alternative medicine takes a holistic approach to treating patients, addressing the mind, body, and spirit as interconnected entities. Rather than focusing on particular disorders or bodily systems, it aims to restore balance by considering the whole well-being of the individual. It is important to remember that health encompasses the whole of physical, mental, and social well-being, rather than just the absence of sickness or incapacity. In order to achieve this definition of health [13], it is essential to prioritize the comprehensive well-being of individuals and use all relevant and evidence-based therapeutic and lifestyle approaches, medical practitioners, and disciplines.

Complementary and alternative medicine is based on the premise that the human body has the inherent ability to cure itself. It prioritizes health restoration above illness treatment and considers sickness as an indication of a shift in the body's natural healing process [14]. In the Middle East, folk medicine is the generally practiced traditional and complementary medicine. It includes self-medication, basic herbal medicines, and ancient therapies including unani, ayurveda, bone setting, and massage [15].

Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) and mainstream medicine

Conventional medicine and complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) have always been in conflict. Due to the frequent referrals of patients by conventional doctors to CAM practitioners, the interaction between the two is now more adaptable [16]. Complementary and alternative medicine is presently prevalent and often used alongside traditional medical treatments. Integrative medicine involves patients integrating traditional medical treatment with complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), demonstrating that these two medical approaches may coexist together. In the present day, the healthcare systems of Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE use herbal complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) in addition to Western therapy [17]. The extensive use of it has had an impact on health professionals, researchers, policymakers, as well as its users.

In order to accommodate the inclination of individuals, particularly in developing nations, to seek out complementary and alternative medicine practitioners, it is imperative to include them into society by offering them appropriate facilities, training, and referral assistance. Developed countries have established regulations and lobbying organizations to facilitate the integration of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) practices into their national healthcare systems [18]. Likewise, certain countries like China, South Korea, India, Singapore, and Hong Kong have successfully implemented integrative medicine (IM) approaches that combine complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) with conventional therapies, ensuring safety and efficacy [19-21]. Adults often turn to complementary and alternative medicine to help manage chronic conditions, including chronic pain, musculoskeletal and respiratory diseases, diabetes, psychiatric problems, and serious conditions like cardiovascular diseases and cancer, which can be expensive for society [22]. Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) employs a diverse array of therapeutic methods, some of which lack empirical evidence, in an effort to prevent or cure illness.

The growing prevalence of CAM

In recent years, Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) has gained significant traction and is now extensively used in contemporary nations and communities to address various clinical illnesses. This widespread adoption may be attributed to its increasing popularity and cultural endorsement. The reasons for the use of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) by the general population differ across countries, especially among persons living in rural regions. The inclusion of CAM practitioners in healthcare facilities is justified by many factors: firstly, economic considerations; secondly, the influence of traditional beliefs; thirdly, the practitioners' reputation and expertise in their area; and fourthly, the scarcity of healthcare professionals [1]. The adoption of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) use, either as a supplemental therapy or an alternative, in patients with disorders is influenced by several aspects, such as the specific ailment or disease, sickness severity, and concurrent drugs. Certain individuals pursue complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) treatments due to their dissatisfaction with traditional medicine or based on anecdotal evidence suggesting the effectiveness of CAM in addressing certain conditions. Several patients exhibit skepticism towards conventional therapy due to their perception that complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) is associated with a lower incidence of adverse effects [23]. Patients turn to complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) due to their dissatisfaction with the significant side effects and exorbitant expenses associated with allopathic treatment. According to [24], individuals are driven by the collaboration, emotional assistance, sympathetic approach, humanistic concern, and attentive listening provided by CAM traditional healers in contrast to contemporary allopathic practitioners.

The majority of patients who use complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) believe that CAM therapies align with their personal beliefs and perspectives on health and life. However, they still want their healthcare professionals to assist them in selecting treatment choices that are backed by scientific evidence or established clinical practices [25]. Patients seldom seek advice from their

physicians on complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) or disclose their use of CAM, since they firmly think that their clinicians have the authority to prohibit its use. Another factor contributing to the increasing interest in CAM is the implementation of a patient-centered approach that empowers patients with the information necessary to make more informed choices [26].

The current state of CAM in Saudi Arabia

In the absence of a comprehensive healthcare plan, the existing healthcare system will be incapable of managing the current and future load of lifestyle-related disorders [27]. The primary motivation for seeking an alternative medical system to solve the unmet requirements in modern medicine is to tackle the challenges created by the increasing prevalence of noncommunicable illnesses and to maintain the quality of healthcare services. In recent years, there has been a notable surge in interest among Saudi Arabian academics, medical professionals, decision-makers, and the general public on the use of traditional and complementary medicines. The Ministry of Health in Saudi Arabia acknowledges that the free healthcare offered to its citizens does not include complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) services. A center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) was founded in accordance with Ministerial Decree No. 236, dated 10/8/1429 H (12/8/2008 G). The center serves as a central hub for all matters concerning CAM and also oversees the implementation of CAM techniques in the healthcare system. Additionally, it promotes the use of EBCAM as a complimentary supplement to traditional medicine [28]. CAM procedures are often associated with the religious beliefs of users. As a result, the prevailing methods include treatment based on the Holy Quran, the use of honey and black seed, and the use of alhijama (cupping) as a type of prophetic medicine [29]. Acupuncture has been recently introduced to the Saudi populace via a well-established clinic in the private sector [30]. Unlike Saudi Arabia, the Western world routinely utilizes many forms of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), such as relaxation methods, ginseng, chiropractic, osteopathy, massage, mineral supplements, and homeopathy [31].

The movement known as evidence-based medicine (EBM)

Where per the current guidelines from the WHO, it is advised to include complementary medicine practitioners into the healthcare system, where needed, in order to enhance the safety and effectiveness of patients' use of complementary treatments [32]. Since the 1990s, the Evidence-Based Medicine (EBM) movement has made significant progress within the medical community. Concurrent with the increase in the use of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), there has been a surge in research, publications, and practices based on evidence connected to CAM. According to Stacks, evidence-based medicine is the careful, clear, and cautious use of the most reliable data when making choices about the treatment of individual patients [33]. The approach highlights the use of data derived from meticulously designed and implemented research to enhance the process of decision-making [34]. Furthermore, it has emerged as an essential element of modern healthcare. Implementing evidence-based medicine improves health outcomes by giving patients more autonomy and control over their

healthcare decisions. Patients are given the autonomy to choose their preferred method of getting healthcare, while also being provided with information on the safety and effectiveness of their chosen approach [35]. The EBM movement seeks to mitigate biases that may otherwise lead to inadequate treatment and uphold the scientific foundation of medicine.

EBM studies aim to reduce the reliance of clinical medicine on heuristics and haphazard, experience-based clinical competence by establishing a more solid evidence foundation for medical practice. Originally, Evidence-Based Medicine (EBM) was created as a response to the limitations and lack of reliability of physicians' own expertise. Healthcare professionals (HCPs) should be familiar with clinical modalities that may be used in addition to traditional medicine. This knowledge can enhance medical practice and enable HCPs to better meet the preferences and needs of their patients [36]. The core principles of Integrative Medicine (IM) are considering all factors that impact health, well-being, and illness; collaborating with both the patient and practitioner in the process of healing; and using IM in a suitable manner to enhance the body's inherent healing mechanisms [37].

Furthermore, it is important to evaluate the suggestions for selecting IM practitioners via reference sources. Given the developing nature of this sector and the increasing demand from patients, it would be prudent for family doctors to familiarize themselves with it. Ancient medicinal techniques have been effectively used for many ailments since ancient times, and they have continued to exist and flourish despite the lack of systematic research on holistic treatment approaches. Nevertheless, in recent decades, scientific studies have begun to investigate the effectiveness of traditional treatment methods in various illnesses and the underlying principles of how they work. This study encompasses randomized controlled trials (RCTs), systematic reviews, meta-analyses, and observational studies on complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) [38]. Traditional medicine rejects many complementary and alternative medicines (CAMs) because their effectiveness is not shown by a double-blinded randomized controlled trial (RCT). In contrast, conventional drugs are only approved for market after their clinical studies confirm their effectiveness [39]. The inquiries pertaining to the safety and effectiveness of these medications will be addressed as research progresses [40]. Contrary to general perception, there exists a greater amount of alternative medical research than is widely acknowledged, mostly because complementary practitioners have a higher understanding of the significance of such research. The Cochran collection comprises over 150 evaluations of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) and almost 6,000 randomized research studies.

The efficacy of EBCAM treatments has been shown, emphasizing the need of integrating complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) with conventional medical systems in order to facilitate the interchange of evidence-based information. The interplay between the two systems has a synergistic impact, aiming to enhance human health [38]. Various research institutes and international health organizations advocate for the use of research and training in traditional medicines worldwide. Healthcare personnel should be aware of their patients' simultaneous and extensive use of complementary and alternative

medicine (CAM) and adjust their perspectives towards it. Health education seminars facilitate communication between healthcare professionals (HCPs) and their patients by improving their comprehension and attitudes towards complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). Decision-makers and program planners need a set of public health policies as references and foundations.

It is recommended to integrate the CAM curriculum into the integrative medical curriculum in order to develop comprehensive theoretical and practical understanding of the proper applications of CAM among medical students, and to equip them with the necessary skills to prescribe CAM treatments successfully and efficiently in the future. The incorporation of the CAM curriculum as an optional or necessary course in several medical colleges in the Western world has been influenced by their extensive experience [40]. It is crucial to promote a comprehensive health policy in Saudi Arabia to improve the well-being of people of all ages, since they are most affected by conditions such as low back and neck pain, depressive disorders, migraine, diabetes, and anxiety disorders.

Conclusion

Complementary and alternative medicine has garnered significant attention in the field of medical sciences and is now recognized as a vital component of the healthcare system. Complementary and alternative medicine is used in developing nations, both inside and outside the official healthcare system. This underscores the need for its control, specifically emphasizing the importance of training and research. Contemporary national healthcare systems increasingly include guidelines for complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) and a structured framework for implementing these suggestions. In order to facilitate healthcare practitioners in advising patients on the proper use of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), it is crucial to regulate and promote evidence-based CAM practices. Additionally, efforts should be made to augment the understanding and perception of CAM among these professionals. Therefore, it is important for doctors to engage in nonjudgmental discussions with their patients on complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). Initiating health education programs is crucial for improving participants' comprehension of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) and fostering discussions on this topic between healthcare practitioners and their patients. A compilation of public health and policy perspectives is essential to provide planners, lawmakers, and program developers with models and benchmarks. It is recommended to include complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) treatments into the integrative medicine (IM) curriculum and to ensure that medical students possess a comprehensive understanding of the guidelines and practical uses of CAM. By integrating CAM practices with rigorous scientific evidence, patients have the ability to make more informed choices about the provision of optimum healthcare.

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دمج الطب التكميلي والبديل في الرعاية الطارئة: التمريض القائم على الأدلة، والصيدلة، وطب القلب، والطب عن بعد

الملخص

الخلفية

لقد حققت التكنولوجيا الحيوية الحالية والإجراءات الطبية تقدمًا ملحوظًا، ومع ذلك، فإن استخدام الطب التكميلي والبديل (CAM) يتطور بسرعة ويتوسع في قطاع الرعاية الصحية. لقد زادت هذه الظاهرة بشكل كبير في الحضارات المعاصرة، وخاصة في الدول النامية. لمعالجة سلوك الأفراد في البحث عن الرعاية الصحية بشكل فعال، من الضروري دمج ممارسي الطب التكميلي والبديل في النظام الصحي السائد.

الهدف

الهدف من هذه المبادرة هو تقديم تدريب شامل، ومرافق كافية، ودعم لتحويل المرضى عند الحاجة، مما يسهل دمج الطب التكميلي والبديل في الرعاية الصحية التقليدية.

الأساليب

تشمل الطريقة تنفيذ علاجات الطب التكميلي القائم على الأدلة (EBCAM) ، التي أظهرت فعالية كبيرة في علاج مختلف الأمراض. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، فإن دمج أنظمة الطب التكميلي الحالية أمر حاسم لتبادل المعلومات القائمة على الأدلة.

النتائج

بينما هناك تأثير إيجابي مشترك من التفاعل بين الطب التقليدي والطب التكميلي، لا تزال هناك فجوات كبيرة في مجال EBCAM تتطلب المزيد من البحث. هذا البحث ضروري لجمع البيانات وتحديد أفضل الممارسات للطب التكميلي.

الاستنتاج

يتطلب تعزيز صحة الأفراد من خلال دمج الطب التكميلي في الرعاية الصحية السائدة إجراء أبحاث مستمرة لسد الفجوات في المعرفة والممارسة. من خلال القيام بذلك، يمكن للنظام الصحي أن يخدم بشكل أفضل احتياجات الأفراد الذين يبحثون عن خيارات علاج شاملة وفعالة.