

ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES: ROLE OF NURSE IN IMPLEMENTING AND EVALUATING THE OUTCOMES OF ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES

Abstract

Complementary therapies are interventions employed in conjunction with conventional therapies, whereas alternative therapies are interventions utilized in lieu of conventional medicine to address or improve health conditions. Both modalities center on the holistic aspects of the body, mind, and spirit. NCCAM (2004) Delineates Five Categories Of CAM: Alternative Medical Systems, Mind Body Interventions,Biologically.

BasedTherapies,Manipulative and Body- Based Methods, Energy Therapies. CAM therapies make use of the natural healing talents of medical professionals, are non invasive, and frequently cost less than orthodox interventions. CAM therapies are intended to promote healing. As natural healers, nurses work in tandem with patients to reestablish mental and physical wholeness. A special chance exists for nurses to offer services that promote completeness. If they are to advocate holistic approaches for patients looking to improve their quality of life, they must be knowledgeable with all facets of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), including pricing, patient education, and drug interactions. CAM therapies are intended to promote healing. As natural healers, nurses work in tandem with patients to reestablish mental and physical wholeness A special chance exists for nurses to offer services that promote completeness. If they are to advocate holistic approaches for patients looking to

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Keywords: A special chance exists for nurses to offer services that promote completeness. NCCAM (2004) Delineates Five Categories Of CAM.

*"There is a natural healing force within us,
and it is the greatest force in getting well."*

-Hippocrates

The origins of alternative therapy can be traced back millennia to ancient societies like India, China, and Greece. In India, Ayurveda and Yoga have remained prominent alternative therapies for many centuries. People globally have displayed a strong curiosity in alternative therapies, seeking natural and holistic approaches to address their health issues.¹

Alternative therapy, often referred to as complementary medicine, serves as a comprehensive descriptor for a variety of healing techniques and approaches that fall outside the realm of conventional Western medicine.¹

In India, the realm of alternative medicine encompasses AYUSH, which includes Ayurveda, yoga, naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and homeopathy, with the primary goal being the integration and advancement of strategies to mainstream indigenous systems of medicine.²

In India, there exist officially registered healthcare facilities that distribute drugs related to CAM (Complementary and Alternative Medicine).³

Numerous studies indicate that the utilization of CAM (Complementary and Alternative Medicine) in the general population ranges between 30% and 40%. This percentage significantly rises within tribal and ethnic minority populations, with over 70% of individuals in these groups using CAM at some point in their lives.⁴

The use of CAM is also quite high in low- and middle-income countries in Asia.⁴

Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) refers to a wide array of medical and healthcare systems, practices, and products that are currently not categorized within the realm of conventional medicine, as defined by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) in 2004.⁵

CAM is alternatively known as mind-body medicine due to its healing approach that harnesses the potential of thoughts and emotions to exert a positive impact on physical health, as described by USA Drug in 2005.⁵

Complementary therapies are interventions employed in conjunction with conventional therapies, whereas alternative therapies are interventions utilized in lieu of conventional medicine to address or improve health conditions. Both modalities center on the holistic aspects of the body, mind, and spirit.⁵

NCCAM (2004) Delineates Five Categories Of CAM:

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
Alternative Medical Systems	Complete medical systems of theory and practice.	Ayurveda, homeopathy, indigenous healing practices, naturopathy, osteopathy, and traditional Chinese medicine.
Mind-Body Interventions	Enhance the mind's capacity to affect bodily functions.	Art therapy, behavioral medicine, biofeedback, dance, dream therapy, humor, hypnotherapy, imagery, intuition, meditation, prayer, music/sound therapy, support groups and yoga.
Biologically Based Therapies	Use of substances found in nature.	Herbs, aromatherapy, diet, flower essence, nutritional supplements, vitamins, and pharmacological/biological treatments.
Manipulative and Body-Based Methods	Manipulation and/or movement of one or more parts of the body.	Acupressure, Alexander technique, chiropractic, craniosacral, Feldenkrais, massage, osteopathy, reflexology, rolfing, and Trager method.
Energy Therapies	Use of electromagnetic fields or energy fields around the body.	Qigong, prayer, reiki, therapeutic touch, full spectrum light, crystals, electromagnetic field, and transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation.

Alternative therapies practiced worldwide,

- 1. Acupressure:** This is a practice in which practitioners utilize their hands, elbows, or feet to exert pressure on specific points along the body's "Meridians." Meridians serve as conduits for the flow of vital life energy throughout the body. The underlying principle posits that when one of these meridians becomes obstructed or unbalanced, it can lead to illness. Acupressure is believed to alleviate these blockages, facilitating the free flow of energy and thereby restoring well-being. In 2013, researchers conducted a study involving a group of adolescents experiencing insomnia. Their findings demonstrated that acupressure expedited the onset of sleep, promoted deeper sleep, and offered relief from pain, headaches, and labor pain.⁶
- 2. Acupuncture:** This therapy involves the insertion of fine needles under the supervision of a practitioner into the skin. Favorable outcomes have been observed in individuals experiencing PMS, insomnia, as well as various forms of chronic pain.⁶

3. **Aromatherapy:** This practice encompasses the application of essential oils and highly concentrated extracts derived from the roots, leaves, seeds, or flowers of plants to facilitate the healing process. These oils can be inhaled through the use of a diffuser or diluted in a carrier oil for skin application through massage. Essential oils are employed for diverse purposes, including the treatment of inflammation or infections, as well as for inducing relaxation and a sense of tranquility.

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Researchers have concentrated on aromatherapy in therapeutic settings to treat anxiety, sadness, pain, nausea, and sleeplessness. In one study, individuals with heart problems who received aromatherapy with lavender reported feeling less anxious and sleeping better. A study on female nurses working night shifts found that sipping a glass of warm water and giving herself a massage with sweet marjoram essential oil improved the quality of her sleep.⁶

4. **Ayurvedic Medicine:** It has thousands of years of history and originated in India. It involves applying a range of methods, such as massage, herbal remedies, and specialty diets, with the goal of promoting overall wellness by balancing the body, mind, and spirit. Numerous studies demonstrate the benefits of certain Ayurvedic treatments, such as oil pulling—swishing coconut oil in your mouth to remove bacteria—or taking turmeric to reduce inflammation or using a Neti pot for nasal irrigation. Numerous mental and physical health conditions, including anxiety, depression, high blood pressure, and sleeplessness, have been repeatedly demonstrated to be improved by yoga.⁶
5. **Balneotherapy:** Water is used in this therapy, which dates back to approximately 1700 BCE, to cure a variety of ailments, including pain, swelling, anxiety, and acne. It involves extended soaks, douches, and the use of mudpacks. Another name for this treatment is "spa therapy." It was discovered in one of the research that low back pain might be reduced by exercising and receiving spa therapy.⁴
6. **Biofeedback:** These methods empower individuals to regulate physiological processes that typically occur involuntarily, such as heart rate, blood pressure, muscle tension, and skin temperature, in order to enhance conditions including high blood pressure, headaches, and chronic pain. Patients collaborate with a biofeedback therapist to acquire these relaxation techniques and mental exercises. In initial sessions, electrodes are affixed to the skin to monitor physiological states, but over time, individuals can practice these techniques without the need for a therapist or equipment. Through biofeedback, individuals gain heightened self-awareness regarding their physical responses to stress, exercise, or emotions. Consequently, they can acquire skills to mitigate adverse effects on their body and overall health. In 2017, researchers collected and analyzed 451 records pertaining to biofeedback and sports performance, revealing that 85 percent of athletes enhanced their performance by using biofeedback to influence their heart rate.⁶
7. **Chiropractic Medicine:** Treating problems in the back, neck, joints, arms, legs, and head, the practice specializes in the musculoskeletal and neurological systems. It includes spine manipulation, which is the process of giving joints that have become hypomobile controlled force—usually from the hands of a chiropractor. It aids in regaining range of motion and relaxing the muscles, promoting tissue repair and pain relief.⁶

- 8. Homeopathy:** This approach is founded on the principle of "similia similibus curentur," wherein a substance that induces adverse reactions in significant quantities can be employed in minimal doses to address identical symptoms.

Homeopaths collect comprehensive patient history prior to recommending a highly diluted substance, typically administered in the form of a liquid or tablet, with the aim of stimulating the body's innate healing mechanisms. These therapeutic interventions are commonly referred to as "remedies."⁶

- 9. Reflexology:** This practice entails the application of pressure to specific regions on the feet, hands, or ears, where these points are thought to correspond to various body organs and systems. The act of applying pressure to these points is believed to have a beneficial impact on both the organs and an individual's overall well-being. For instance, applying pressure to a specific point on the arch of the foot is believed to have a positive effect on bladder function. People worldwide employ this therapy in conjunction with conventional treatments for conditions such as anxiety, cancer, diabetes, kidney function, and asthma. It has been shown to contribute to the reduction of depression and anxiety in patients with cardiovascular disease, chemotherapy-induced nausea, and fatigue, as well as in mitigating stress.⁶

- 10. Reiki:** This is a type of energy healing that operates on the principle that a vital "life force" energy circulates within every individual's body. According to this belief system, ailments and stress are manifestations of diminished life force energy, while vitality, health, and contentment indicate a robust life force. During a Reiki session, a practitioner aims to transmit life energy to the recipient by gently placing their hands on or slightly above the client's body, and it can also be conducted remotely. Additionally, Reiki is known to foster relaxation, accelerate the healing process, alleviate discomfort, and generally enhance the recipient's overall state of well-being.⁶

The body of research indicates that the conviction that complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) is effective and can have an impact is one of the factors propelling its use (Berman & Straus, 2004).⁷ Taking personal responsibility for their health, reevaluating available therapies, and adopting a pragmatic lifestyle are the reasons why people with chronic illnesses seek complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) therapy (Thorne, Paterson, Russell, & Schultz, 2002).⁷

CAM treatments center on the idea of energy. It is believed that the body is an energy system with chakras, or energy centers, and meridians, or energy transport channels (Eden, 1998). CAM practitioners hold that healthy aging is a result of having a good "energy" system because the human body is made up of interconnected energy fields. Based on the idea that the body is an energy system, acupuncture, acupressure, reflexology, Reiki, and therapeutic touch are practised. As a result, abnormalities in the body's energy system that correspond with illness should be found and addressed. The noninvasive restoration of flow and balance in an energy system can be achieved by massage, tapping, stretches, and yoga-style poses.⁶

CAM therapies make use of the natural healing talents of medical professionals, are non-invasive, and frequently cost less than orthodox interventions.

CAM therapies are intended to promote healing. As natural healers, nurses work in tandem with patients to reestablish mental and physical wholeness. As a result, Healthy People 2010 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2000) suggests that patients can live longer and of higher quality.⁷

A special chance exists for nurses to offer services that promote completeness. If they are to advocate holistic approaches for patients looking to improve their quality of life, they must be knowledgeable with all facets of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), including pricing, patient education, and drug interactions.⁵

11. Nurses Need to Understand Certain Issues Surrounding CAM use:

- Due to the paucity of research and the unconventional nature of complementary and alternative medicine, insurance companies may restrict the use of CAM therapies, and consumers and healthcare professionals may approach them with caution.⁷
- According to research, consumers frequently start using CAM without first speaking with their doctors or other healthcare experts. It's unknown why this is happening (Brunelli & Gordon, 2004). It is crucial that nurses discuss CAM use with patients while keeping patient safety in mind. They should particularly focus on any potentially detrimental interactions between CAM therapies and already prescribed conventional medicines (Miller et al., 2004; Tindle et al., 2005). These conversations, together with the particular treatments and related patient education, need to be recorded in the patient's medical file.⁷
- As natural healers, nurses must be knowledgeable with complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), how it interacts with traditional treatments, and relevant research in order to appropriately support patients' CAM investigation and use.⁷
- Before creating a care plan that incorporates the use of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), nurses must evaluate their patients' views, knowledge, and current usage of CAM..⁷
- The patient should be advised to learn as much as they can about the therapy, by the nurse's suggestion. It is imperative to motivate patients to become knowledgeable buyers of goods and services. For comfort and assistance in understanding CAM treatments, it is advised that patients bring a significant other to appointments (American Cancer Society, 2004). Remind patients not to put off receiving regular care in the form of conventional treatments while they look into complementary therapies.⁷
- If a nurse is interested in providing treatment that is holistic, they want to find out if their facility offers complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). Developing policies and procedures for the use of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), particularly nutritional supplements, might be aided by nurses. According to Dutta et al. (2003), just half of the 148 nursing schools assessed in 2003 included CAM in their curriculum. Working with nursing schools to broaden their curricula to include CAM therapies is an option available to nurses.⁷

12. Role of Nurse In Implementing and Evaluating the Alternative Therapies:

- Give the patient complete transparency about the therapy, including a discussion of the benefits and drawbacks of every therapeutic choice.
- It is important to understand the ethical, cultural, and practical implications of alternative therapy in order to effectively advocate for patients' comprehensive, high-quality care.
- When it's acceptable, go over the available alternatives for alternative therapy with the patient and their family, and support their decision.
- Look for ways to spread the word about the advantages of complementary and alternative medicine in wellness and preventive care.
- Conduct, encourage, and/or take part in studies looking into how well alternative therapy works as a nursing intervention.
- Encourage professional nursing organizations to work collaboratively
- Encourage medical professionals and facilities to accept and incorporate the availability of alternative and traditional therapies into the health care delivery system, giving patients the option to receive both types of care.
- Encourage nursing programs to incorporate concepts and material from alternative therapies into their current curricula.⁷
- To guarantee the effective and extensive deployment of any therapy, initiate a small-scale trial project and distribute the outcomes.⁸
- Establish the project's goals and scope, gain the support of stakeholders, and decide on funding and resources.⁸
- Conduct a thorough analysis of potential risks or side effects connected to certain treatments. Make an effort to choose organic items from a reliable supplier and to confirm the products' purity.⁸
- Develop patient education and assessment policies (including testing patients for allergies), create standardized processes for the production of electronic health records, measure patient outcomes, and establish program policies and procedures.⁸
- Analyze the program's efficacy and security. Has the patient had less pain, nausea, anxiety, or worse sleep? Is the intervention financially wise? Is the patient showing signs of increased contentment with the treatment they got? Does the patient gain from the therapy's expense by being more satisfied and well-being?⁸

In summary, the nursing profession has a long tradition of providing comprehensive care for patients. Florence Nightingale promoted interventions that improved people's capacity to use their innate healing talents because she understood the value of treating the full person. She believed that supportive touch, light, aromas, calm introspection, music, and other healing techniques were necessary components of quality nursing care.⁷

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