

SURVEY ON KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS ABOUT COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE AMONG DENTAL PATIENTS

RUNNING TITLE: Awareness about complementary and alternative medicine.

TYPE OF ARTICLE: Research (survey)

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ABSTRACT:

AIM: To assess the knowledge and Awareness about Complementary & alternative medicine among dental patients.

OBJECTIVE: To evaluate and determine the Awareness about Complementary & alternative medicine among dental patients.

MATERIALS AND METHODS: A questionnaire based survey among dental patients from Saveetha Dental College between 18-70 years are selected for the study. Sample size of approximately 200 individuals who are being tested with a questionnaire containing 12 questions.

RESULTS: 61% of participants were aware of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) while 39% were not aware of it. Out of these only 43% of population had knowledge about most of the modalities in CAM while others had knowledge about three or four modalities. The most common source of knowledge was found to be through friends and family (37%) and through internet (48%). Participants were well aware of modalities such as Homeopathy (75%), Ayurveda medicine (88%), meditation (82%), yoga (80%) and herbal medicine (87%).

Keywords: CAM, homeopathy, alternative medicine, therapy, ayurveda

INTRODUCTION:

Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) covers a wide range of approaches, including herbal medicine, manual healing techniques, traditional therapies and mind–body interventions (1). CAM is widely used throughout the world to treat a variety of illnesses and to maintain health. The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (2) in the United States defines CAM as a group of diverse medical and healthcare systems, practices and products that are not presently considered to be part of conventional medicine.

Complementary and alternative medicine comprises of a diverse set of healing philosophies, therapies and products. It is evident from the history of healing through medicine that traditional therapies have been successfully used for treatment alongside (3).

CAM procedures are frequently used when a patient with a chronic health problem hasn't responded well to conventional treatment. The list of CAM procedures includes Homeopathy, Naturopathy, Ayurveda, Acupuncture, Hypnosis, Biofeedback, Aromatherapy, Chiropractic etc. This type of health care is greatly influenced by culture and tradition of society (4,5). The use of CAM has increased dramatically in many countries due to its accessibility, affordability as well its perceived efficacy and safety in treating diseases as compared to allopathic medicine (6). Advances of scientific research have brought about better understanding of diseases and mechanism of action of allopathic (7).

The National centre for complementary and alternative medicine (NCCAM) has grouped CAM therapies into 5 domains; alternative medical systems, mind body interventions, biologic-based therapies, manipulative and body based methods and energy therapies (8).

Out of these as mentioned above homeopathy, herbal medicine and acupuncture are practiced commonly (9). These alternative therapies are quickly gaining importance as they are perceived to be free of side effects, considering their natural origin (10).

Researches shows 2860 hospitals in India uses TM (traditional medicine) (11). Though CAM therapies are widely used for medical problems, their use in dental practice still remains less. Researchers should come forward and be encouraged to do more clinical trials with these alternative medicines to gain more evident to support their effects.

While some people use CAM therapies alone, many of the CAM users continue to access conventional system as well. CAM is commonly used by adults for musculoskeletal, respiratory illnesses and chronic conditions like cancer, diabetes and psychiatric problems. The patients may not discuss CAM use with their physicians because the physicians do not enquire about it nor do they consider it important to discuss or may be reluctant to disclose. However, some of the therapies may be associated with side-effects and drug interactions, or may add to the effects of poly-pharmacy (12,13).

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

A questionnaire based survey was conducted among patients of Saveetha Dental College. 200 participants were included in this study population. 12 questions were prepared based on the reference to previous done studies with few options for each question. The patients were provided with the printed copies of the questions and were asked to answer based on their own knowledge about the topic. The participants were given adequate time to fill the forms. The questionnaire consisted of 2 questions regarding their basic information such as Age and gender and the other 10 questions were based on awareness of CAM. The data of the completely filled forms were then recorded in the excel sheet. The results were then analysed and were interpreted in the form of tabular columns, pie charts and graphs.

RESULTS:

TABLE 1: Demographics

1)Age of the patient	Participants
<30 years	100 (50%)
>30 years	100 (50%)

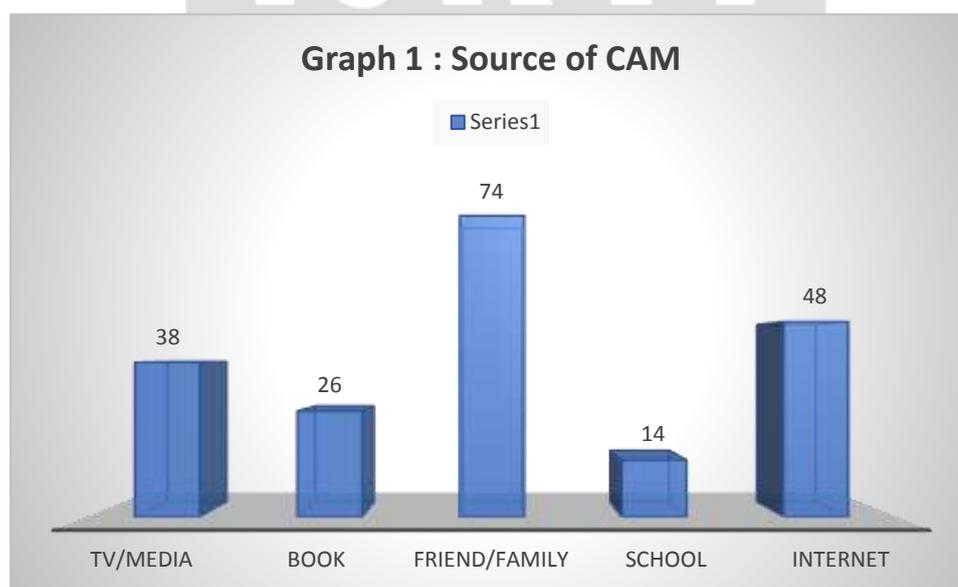
2)Gender of the patient	Participants
Males	82 (41%)
Females	118 (59%)

The study population includes 200 participants with 82 males (41%) and 118 females (59%). The mean Age was considered to be 30 years. Hence the population was divided into < 30 years with 100 participants and > 30 with 100 participants.

TABLE 2 : Knowledge of CAM

Question	Yes	No
3)Do you know what is CAM (complementary and alternative medicine)	122 (61%)	78 (39%)
4) Have you heard most of 17 listed CAM modalities?	86 (43%)	114 (57%)

With this survey of 200 participants were came to know 61% of the participants were aware of CAM while 39% were not aware of it. Out of this only 43% were aware of most of the CAM modalities while 57% only knew very few or none.



As shown in graph 1, the source of knowledge of CAM among patients was obtained by various options like Television and media n=38 (19%), books n=26 (13%), friends and family n=74 (37%), Schools n=14 (7%), Internet n= 48 (24%). Most of them were aware about the complementary and alternative medicine through their friends and family members and by searching through internet services.

TABLE 3 : Awareness about various modalities of CAM among the patients

Modalities	Participants	%
Homeopathy	150	75%
Acupuncture	64	32%
Aromatherapy	24	12%
Faith healing	22	11%
Traditional African healing	18	9%
Hypnosis	44	22%
Yoga	160	80%
Energy medicine	24	12%
Biofeedback	30	15%
Herbal medicine	174	87%
Reflexology	42	21%
Meditation	164	82%
Iridology	40	20%
Massage therapy	130	65%
Chiropractic	34	17%
Ayurvedic medicine	176	88%
Naturopathy	56	28%

As table 3 shows the number of participants are aware of each modality of the 17 options of CAM. This table shows that most of the study population are aware of homeopathy, yoga, herbal medicine, meditation, massage therapy, Ayurveda medicine while they are least aware of modalities such as faith healing, Traditional African healing etc.

TABLE 4 : Attitude of Patient's towards Complementary and alternative medicine

Questions	Yes	No
Do you use CAM along with the allopathic medicine	124 (62%)	76 (38%)
Do you disclose your doctor about the use of CAM during healthcare visit?	74 (37%)	126 (63%)
Do you believe CAM is beneficial ?	138 (69%)	62 (31%)
Would you recommend CAM to your friends/ relatives ?	148 (74%)	52 (26%)
Do you insist that CAM should be introduced in education system ?	164 (82%)	36 (18%)
Is it necessary for a patient to have a good knowledge about CAM ?	142 (71%)	58 (29%)

DISCUSSION:

Conventional therapy included treatment given by healthcare disciplines working in public health (nursing, physiotherapy, occupational and psychotherapy). Complementary therapies included those accepted for use in the public health system (acupuncture, acupressure, massage, chiropractic, etc.). Alternative therapies were those not accepted for use in the public health system (homeopathy, healing forms, reflexology, and herbal medicine) (14). Although India is the birth place of one of the oldest CAMs in existence, that is, Ayurveda and the Government of India has recognized Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Siddha and Unani and Homeopathy (AYUSH) as Indian systems of Medicine, there are very few published studies documenting the extent of use, attitude and perception towards CAM in the Indian population (15,16,17).

In the recent years tremendous interest has grown in complementary and alternative medicine and its relevance to medical and dental health. Most of the medical schools started offering education in complementary medicine. The desire among human beings to explore beyond the realms of modern conventional medical treatment is frequently observed.

The present study highlights the awareness and knowledge about the complementary and alternative medicine among the randoms patients. Most of the participants (61%) were aware of CAM. It was found that they mostly gained self-knowledge through options such as television or media, by surfing through internet and through family and friends as proved by previous few studies among university students in US and northern India which reported that family to be a major source of information and recommendation concerning herbal product use (18). Very few participants gained knowledge through educational programs and lectures on CAM which includes school education also.

Majority of the study population (62%) accepted that they use CAM along with allopathic medicine. They believe to be more effective when used together. Further as proved by previous studies, our study results also shows that womens' are more knowledgeable about CAM when compared to males (19,20). They also found that more women used CAM and that women responded more positively about the scientific basis, side-effects and long-term effects. The cultural context and differing health beliefs between the genders may be the likely reason for this observation (21).

This study also highlights that majority of the patients (63%) are not revealing their use of CAM to their healthcare professionals. This may be due to the fact that most of the professionals may not encourage them to use these traditional methods. A possible reason for this could be that the doctors feel they don't have sufficient knowledge to suggest use of CAM to their patients. Although their awareness about CAM may permit them to use CAM for their own personal problems. Lack of knowledge among doctors has been a well cited reason in many studies for not to use or recommend CAM to patients (22,23). Thus when asked in our study, 82% of the study population voted that they insist incorporation of this Complementary and alternative Medicine into the education system and the curriculum in order to provide and acquire more knowledge and awareness from the Schools and higher studies itself.

Surprisingly our study reveals that 69% of the study population agreed to the fact that CAM is beneficial and 71% of the participants voted that it should be necessary for a patient to have knowledge about complementary and alternative medicine. 74% of the population agreed that they would recommend the complementary and alternative medicine to their friends and friends due to the effectiveness and use of CAM and also it has less side effects.

CONCLUSION:

Complementary Alternative Medicine (CAM) is a broad domain of healing resources that encompasses all health systems, modalities and practices and their accompanying theories and beliefs. It is being used commonly both by doctors and patients and often concomitantly with allopathic medicines. Due to the advancement in technology and the social media, most people are aware of the CAM. But only few participants were educated about the CAM through lectures and educational programs. Thus it is very important for the education system to incorporate about these complementary and alternative medicine and their use and benefits through lectures and their curriculum. On the other hand, even medical professionals should consider the effects and the uses of CAM and encourage their patients to take up the complementary and alternative medicine.

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