The Alternative to Confusion: Practical Tips for Navigating Integrative Medicine in Patient Care

Greta Kuphal, MD
Associate Clinical Professor, UW Dept of Family Medicine and Community Health Director, UW Academic Integrative Health Fellowship

Objectives
- Understand categories of Integrative Health therapies
- Know at least 4 reliable integrative health resources that are available for point of care answers
- Increase comfort in working with patients interested in or working with complementary and alternative medicine providers

Conflicts of Interest
None.

Definitions: Complementary, Alternative and Integrative

- "If a non-mainstream practice is used together with conventional medicine, it's considered "complementary."
- "If a non-mainstream practice is used in place of conventional medicine, it's considered "alternative.""
- "Integrative health care often brings conventional and complementary approaches together in a coordinated way. It emphasizes a holistic, patient-focused approach to health care and wellness—often including mental, emotional, functional, spiritual, social, and community aspects—and treating the whole person rather than, for example, one organ system. It aims for well-coordinated care between different providers and institutions."

Source: https://nccih.nih.gov/health/integrative-health#hed3

Where Are You on the Spectrum?

People Are Using These Modalities!

- The practice of yoga has increased between 2012 and 2017 from 9.5% to 14.3%
- In that time, use of meditation increased from 4.2% to 14.3%
Categories: Old and New

National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health previously had 5 categories of integrative interventions:

- Biologically Based Practices
- Mind-Body Medicine
- Manipulative Body-Based Practices
- Energy Medicine
- Whole Body Systems

However, they have now decreased that to 3 categories:

- Natural Products
- Mind and Body Practices
- Other Complementary Health Approaches

Biologically Based Practices: Nutrition and Supplements Resources

Evaluates commercially available dietary supplement products for composition, potency, purity, bioavailability, and consistency of products.—$80 for a 2 year subscription.

Biologically Based Practices: Nutrition and Supplements—Markers of Quality

NSF is a nonprofit public health organization. NSF's certification service includes product testing, Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) inspections, ongoing monitoring, and use of the NSF Mark.

Certifies the following:
- Contains the ingredients listed on the label, in the declared potency and amounts; does not contain harmful levels of specified contaminants, will break down and release into the body within a specified amount of time; has been made according to FDA current Good Manufacturing Practices using sanitary and well-controlled procedures.

GMPs set standards for purity, strength, and potency of the supplements to reflect what is stated on the label.
**Mind Body Medicine**

**Defined by the NIH as:**

“interventions that use a variety of techniques designed to facilitate the mind’s capacity to affect bodily functions and symptoms.”

**A Spectrum of Techniques**

- Psychotherapies
- Biofeedback
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Meditation
- Breathing exercises
- Cognitive behavioral therapy
- Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing
- Therapeutic disclosure
- Clinical Hypnosis
- And many more...

**Manipulative Body-Based Practices**

- Exercise of all types (aerobic, weight lifting, yoga, Feldenkrais, tai chi, etc)
- Manipulative therapies (OMT, chiropractic care, etc)
- Massage therapy (MFR, Rolfing, etc)

**Energy Medicine**

The term “energy medicine” derives from the perceptions and beliefs of therapists and patients that there are subtle, biologic energies that surround and permeate the body. It is suggested that these energies may be accessed in various ways through CAM for diagnostic and therapeutic interventions.

- Healing Touch and Reiki may be most popular at this time
- Acupuncture works with chi, yoga often works with prana and the chakras

**QUERI Evidence Map for Mindfulness**

- 81 systematic reviews, up to Feb. 2014
- Y axis = size of the literature
- X axis = efficacy
- Size of circle = number of reviews
- Green is Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)
- Pink is Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT)
- Purple is a combo of MBSR and MBCT
- Blue is for “unique interventions”

**QUERI Evidence Map for Tai Chi**

- Many approaches
  - MFR
  - Gua sha
  - Structural integration
  - Trager
  - PT
  - Shiatsu
- Helpful for chronic low back pain, pain related to cancer, procedural pain and rheumatic pain
Energy Medicine

- At least 97 cultures have described energetic phenomena
  - (John White, Future Science, Anchor books, 1977)
  - Chi in China, Ki in Japan, fohat in Tibet, prana in India, pneuma in Greece, astral light in Kabbalah
  - Also referred to as vital energy, orgone, odic force, homeopathic resonance, subtle energies.
  - Integral to most cultural healing systems (TCM, shamanism, Ayurveda)

Whole Body Systems

- Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)
  - Ayurveda
  - Naturopathy
  - Homeopathy
  - Functional Medicine

TCM

- Thousands of years old
- Includes herbs, acupuncture, other recommendations/treatments to prevent and heal disease
- Acupuncture is only a piece of TCM but certainly one of the fastest growing modalities being more widely accepted for treatment of pain, nausea, headaches, etc.

Evidence Map of Acupuncture for Pain

- Chronic
- Migraine
- Headache
- Dysmenorrhea
- Osteoarthritis
- Cancer pain
- Labor pain
- TMJ


CLINICAL GUIDELINE

**Noninvasive Treatments for Acute, Subacute, and Chronic Low Back Pain: A Clinical Practice Guideline From the American College of Physicians**

- Acupuncture was superior to both sham and no acupuncture control for each pain condition (all p<0.001)
- We conclude that acupuncture is effective for the treatment of chronic pain, with treatment effects persisting over time
Functional Medicine

- "Functional Medicine determines how and why illness occurs and restores health by addressing the root causes of disease for each individual."
- "The Functional Medicine model is an individualized, patient-centered, science-based approach that empowers patients and practitioners to work together to address the underlying causes of disease and promote optimal wellness. It requires a detailed understanding of each patient's genetic, biochemical, and lifestyle factors and leverages that data to direct personalized treatment plans that lead to improved patient outcomes."

From: https://www.ifm.org/functional-medicine/

Ayurveda

- Sanskrit term Ayurveda translates to "knowledge of life".
- Emphasis on total wellness; the art and science of Ayurveda work to harmonize our internal and external worlds.
- Five senses serve as the portals between the internal and external realms.
- Five great elements of ether, air, fire, water, and earth: these elements are the basis of Ayurvedic thought.

Ayurveda practitioners believe in five types of energy and functional principles that are present in everybody and everything. Since there are no single words in English to describe these principles, we use the Sanskrit words Vata, Pitta, and Kapha to describe their combinations.

Taken from: https://www.aish.org/articles/basic-principles-of-ayurveda/

Naturopathy – Principles

1. Healing Power of Nature (Vis Medicatrix Naturae). The body has the innate wisdom to heal itself with proper guidance/tools.
2. Identify and Treat the Causes (Tolle Causam). Don’t just treat presenting symptoms.
3. First Do No Harm (Primum Non Nocere). Begin with minimal interventions.
4. Doctor as Teacher (Docere) – NDs educate patients, involve them in the process.
5. Treat the Whole Person.
6. Prevention Fundamental.

Naturopathy - Philosophy

- Arise out of natural cure movement of Europe.
- Illness viewed as a process of disturbance to health in the context of natural systems.
- 6 specific but adaptable steps to therapy:
  1. Re-establish conditions of health (e.g., diet and lifestyle).
  2. Stimulate natural healing (e.g., via hydrotherapy).
  4. Correct structural integrity (physical medicine, massage).
  5. Address pathology using natural substances.
  6. Correct with synthetic substances.

Naturopathy

- 17 states have licensing for ND’s.
- They study for 4 years.
- For more information:

  - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naturopathy_and_the_Primary_Care_Doctor
  - https://www.ndau.org/ndprc/primer/NDACPR_Initiative.html
  - https://www.aish.org/articles/basic-principles-of-ayurveda/
Homeopathy

- Derived from the Greek words for “like” and “suffering.”
- The guiding principle “likes cure likes”
- Origins in ancient Egyptian medicine, as well as in Hippocratic medicine of the ancient Greeks.
- Codified by Samuel Hahnemann, a 17th-century German medical doctor. Hahnemann and his followers went on to prove hundreds of plant, mineral, animal and disease substances. These symptoms were cataloged in homeopathic materia medica, which today include more than 2000 remedies.
- Each remedy has a full profile of mental, emotional, and physical pathological symptoms.
- Homeopathic remedies are compiled in the Homoeopathic Pharmacopoeia of the United States, which is recognized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Objectives

- Understand categories of Integrative Health therapies
- Know at least 4 reliable integrative health resources that are available for point of care answers
- Increase comfort in working with patients interested in or working with complementary and alternative medicine providers.

Summary

- Many patients use integrative health modalities
- There are a number of reliable and accessible resources to help clinicians understand
- Patients seeking out alternative or complementary therapies are simply seeking a path to health—by learning a bit about these therapies, we can better partner with our patients.

Key Resources

- UW Integrative Health Program: https://www.fammed.wisc.edu/integrative/resources/modules/
- Whole Health: https://wholehealth.wisc.edu/National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health: https://nccih.nih.gov/
- Consumer Lab: https://www.consumerlab.com/
- Natural Medicines Database: https://naturalmedicines.therapeuticresearch.com/
- University of Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine: https://integrativemedicine.arizona.edu/
- Academic Consortium for Integrative Medicine and Health: https://imconsortium.org/
- This Institute for Functional Medicine: https://www.ifm.org/functional-medicine/