# Alternative Medicine The New Path

Before today's age, people in the past would go to a medicine man, shaman or a witch doctor, now with today's advancement, they go to see doctors get pills. Back then the community relied on the Earth to heal their bodies and their mind. Alternative medicine is a type of medicine that was used to help heal the body, without having to get surgery, or take a number of pills; in order to get rid of a certain disease. It uses the Earth, the body's healing abilities, and the mind, and heightens those abilities that turn it into something more appealing. The people in the past had this ability, the apothecary took the things that were around them and used it to turn into something useful. The doctors of the past took the herbs that Mother Earth gave us to find a way to turn it into tinctures that can be used to heal the illness. Alternative medicine is a type of medicine that involves many varieties of techniques that have been used between 100 to 1,000 years ago.

Homeopathic medicine could offer someone a choice, that western or complementary medicine could not. The community used to have people they went to who could harness the earth's magic of healing and give it to the world as a type of medicine or therapy. As the world grows and thrives, so does technology and medicine along with the lack of evidence and the number of believers who no longer think that homeopathic medicine is a good investment or a smart choice. However, if we were to combine alternative medicine with complementary medicine, it would create personal patient treatments in order for the patients to get better results overall. This is called integrative medicine.

According to Robert Anderson, M.D, who has been practicing holistic medicine for three decades and is a founding member and past President of the Holistic Medicine Association; and is also the founder and current President of the American Board of Holistic Medicine, which initiated the first board certification for holistic physicians in December of 2000. In his book, the Clinician's Guide to Holistic Medicine, he defined integrative medicine as that it " implies a higher-level amalgamation of conventional medical practice and many other disciplines into some orderly aspect of theories, practices, and options" (Anderson 2). Nowadays that used by "trained" use pills and surgeries to get rid of ailments. The Integrated (or Integrative) Medicine (IM) is now used. According to an article titled "Integrated Health: Combining Conventional Healthcare with Alternative Medicine" written by Dr. Rajendra Sharma, who is the author of the award-winning "Live Longer, Live Younger" and also practices integrated medicine on Wimpole street, London and in Exeter, Devon, says, "IM is a mixture of conventional with Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM)... As global health systems feel the pressure of increasing costs, the sensibility of combining some Integrated Medicine into national health care seems logical and has been proven as viable. Treating people with chronic diseases may account for 86% of our nation's health care costs based on USA figures. Arguably this makes the cost of care, using the current model, economically unsustainable. We need to find ways of changing this slide to affordability. There are a number of studies suggesting that CAM may reduce medical expenses and costs but others, based on the current paradigm of orthodox medicine, that do not" (Sharma). Unfortunately, the lack of finances towards healthcare hinders today's society to benefit from today's practices. More and more people are looking for all costs or low costs alternatives.

In an article titled “Point: The Dangers of Alternative Medicine” by John Pearson, he says, “Alternative practitioners have learned they can give the appearance of working with modern scientific medicine by calling themselves practitioners of ‘Complementary and Alternative Medicine’ (CAM). This is somewhat similar to the proponents of creationism arguing that the book of Genesis in the Bible should be taught alongside evolution as an alternative theory of ‘Intelligent Design.’ In other words, it's not really science, it's faith-based, but if it sounds scientific or 'complementary' to scientific theory, perhaps it can be slipped into the classroom. The danger of attempting to integrate alternative therapies into healthcare plans is that it further clouds the line between proven medicine and unproven, possibly dangerous alternatives. There is some evidence that insurers are embracing acupuncture and chiropractic services not because they offer proven benefits, but because they are cheaper than orthopedic surgeons, physical therapists or other scientific practitioners, thus adding more to insurers' bottom lines, at least in the short term,” (Pearson). Because alternative medicines and therapies are not regulated and generally not supported by credible sources, they may hinder treatments that may be harmful. Some therapies known as alternative medicine are ineffective and sometimes dangerous. Their comforting claims may be psychologically appealing, but these treatments are unregulated and not tested for safety, so they may contain toxic substances, produce unwanted side effects, or negatively interact with conventional medicines. In addition, they may encourage patients with serious diseases to seek non-traditional treatments as an alternative to the standard of care provided by traditional doctors or hospitals. There is little scientific evidence that confirms the usefulness of alternative remedies. Research reports, when they do exist, tend to discredit the treatments they study. According to an article titled “Point: Alternative Medicine is Unscientific, Unproven, and Unsafe” by M. Lee and Nancy Sprague says, “According to recent studies, in 2004 as many as 48 percent of Americans experimented with at least one medicine or health therapy that fell under the category of alternative medicine (sometimes called complementary alternative medicine or CAM). Treatments, as varied as acupuncture, homeopathy, naturopathy, faith healing, foot reflexology, and Ayurvedic herbal supplements, are quickly becoming part of the medical mainstream but, many Americans are even starting to forgo it entirely. The American Medical Association (AMA) reports that more visits are now made to providers of alternative medicine than to conventional doctors. Most are wanting alternatives to everyday medicine and fell that the doctors are giving them a placebo in place of the actual treatment. Neck and back pain in patients are common targets for CAM treatment. The majority of alternative remedies are still promoted by vague, improbable claims about their effectiveness, supported by little or no trustworthy scientific research, and managed in an area that is largely unregulated by governing bodies. The individuals and companies that sell these products and services, whether well-meaning believers themselves or swindlers out for a share of the burgeoning market, are not held accountable for the potential health hazards their treatments may pose.” (Lee).

However, today medicine is constantly being invented and changed, and there is nothing that we can change people’s opinions about medicine and whether it works or not. But what are the researchers saying about this, “Dr. Paul Offit, who is the chief of the infectious diseases division at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia criticizes CAM, ' It crosses a line into quackery when you take something that can be harmful and you don't know it', who is the author of Do You Believe in Magic? The Sense and Nonsense of Alternative Medicine,' some alternative therapies have terrible side effects,” the author also says, “ Offit says a huge amount of garlic can cause bleeding, ' when you take large quantities of concentrated anything, you have an issue. If they're making a claim that it has a positive pharmacological effect, then it can also have a negative effect.'(Baker). So if this is so dangerous as researchers say, why should

people even try to use it, and why isn't the government doing anything? What does the FDA have to say about these issues? Well, the answer is that they have. The FDA inspections of the supplement producers have revealed numerous failures to maintain sanitary facilities or properly verify ingredients. ' The FDA is supposed to regulate the labeling of supplements to ensure that supplement manufacturers do not make unproven health claims, however, they do not have time or the manpower based on current funding through the government. The agency monitors the safety of more than 80,000 dietary supplements according to the FDA spokeswoman Tamara Ward. Although there are only 30 people at its Washington office is dedicated to ensuring supplement safety, and regional offices also may monitor supplements and pharmaceuticals, and only 1/2 of which were supplements, which were posing a serious risk and containing unapproved ingredients." (Baker). However, there were still people who believed that alternative medicine does in fact work. Based on the word of mouth and testimonies of friends and family this product does really work.

According to an article titled "Counterpoint: Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) Techniques Provide Innovative Health Benefits" written by Beverly Ballaro and Ann Griswolds says, " Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM)-which includes non-mainstream health care practices such as acupuncture, mind-body techniques, dietary supplements, and herbal remedies, and therapeutic massage-has invaluable benefits to offer patients and physicians seeking to expand the repertoire of standard Western approaches to health and disease. Various therapies have the potential to show effectiveness but have no merit according to today's medicine. CAM techniques may be safe in children, where synthetic chemicals may have potential long-term consequences. For instance, honey can be substituted for cough medicine (for children over 1) and yoga can be used to relieve asthma and stress" (Ballaro). As of the mid-2000s CAM has moved from the fringes of health care practice to the mainstream. Leading academic medical centers, such as those affiliated with Harvard and Stanford, for example, have established institutes dedicated exclusively to CAM. Respected researchers have made CAM a central focus of their careers. Major medical journals regularly publish articles on CAM research findings. In the same article, Ballaro writes, " At the same time, researchers have been producing credible scientific evidence in support of CAM therapies that do work. In 2006 and 2007, numerous promising studies were published. Many of the examined therapies drawn from traditional Chinese medicine. The data gathered suggest the potential applications of CAM: Tai chi, an ancient Chinese type of exercise, may help prevent shingles as well as significantly improve physical functioning, vitality and, mental health in older adults; a particular combination of Chinese herbs may alleviate the symptoms of depression and bipolar disorder; the application of transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) on specific acupuncture points may provide pain relief for women during labor and delivery, and the stimulation of acupoint P6 can prevent postoperative nausea and vomiting with minimal side effects." (Ballaro) Many alternatives can help this is the end but most of today's doctors will not say that this is practical due to the big Pharma want their though it is possible to find a lesser cost for treatment and possibly could prevent surgeries or even taking pills that may or may not work in the long run. In particular, as modern medical breakthroughs increase longevity rates and transform once deadly diseases such as HIV/AIDS and many forms of cancer-into manageable conditions, CAM has an important role to play in the development of new, easily tolerated pain relief strategies for the aging American population. Just as every religion has had fundamentalists who believed their world view is the only one and all who differ are living in darkness, every medial traditional has also had them. None has been immune to the propensity to label other traditions as irresponsible, harmful, or quackery. Unfortunately, such fundamentalism is on the decline as it has become clear that no single tradition has all the

answers for the emerging health challenges we face. Just as the author of The American Holistic Health Association Complete Guide to Alternative Medicine, William Collinge said, “We now know that at least a third of America use some form of alternative medicine. On their own, people are choosing to integrate other traditions with their regular allopathic care. By voting with their feet, they are choosing a new paradigm of health care that could be called integrative Medicine.” (Collinge).

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