

CHAPTER 23

Terms in Complementary and Alternative Medicine

After studying this chapter, you will be able to:

- 23.1 Define complementary and alternative medicine
- 23.2 Describe some of the historical aspects of complementary and alternative medicine
- 23.3 List the five major classifications of complementary and alternative medicines

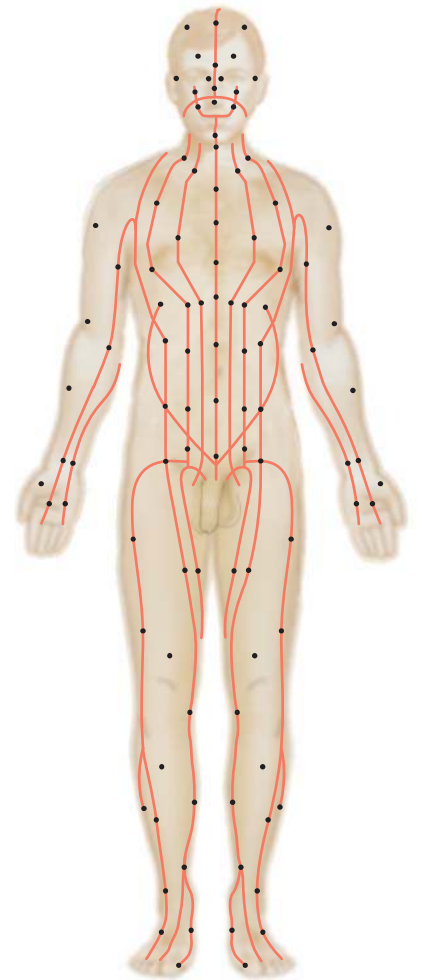
What Is Complementary and Alternative Medicine?

Most medical practices in the United States are run under *conventional medicine* standards. These standards include most of the practices learned in medical schools and endorsed by national organizations, such as the American Medical Association (AMA). However, other types of medical practice are used to treat, heal, and prevent illness and promote well-being in large areas of the world, as well as by many practitioners in the United States. When such practices are used in combination or alongside conventional medicine, they are called **complementary medicine**. When they are used instead of conventional medicine, they are called **alternative medicine**. Some forms of complementary or alternative medicine are considered *holistic medicine*, treatment of the whole person, including physical, nutritional, environmental, social, and emotional needs.

History of Alternative Medicine

Since the times of the earliest humans, people have healed themselves physically or spiritually using whatever was available to them in their environment. In most cases, minor injuries and infections were treated with mechanical techniques or plants (which are the source of many current traditional medicines). Gradually, knowledge of treatment and healing was passed down through generations. Some people became experts in certain treatments; for example, some women became midwives, assisting other women in childbirth. Spiritual healers also had a place in the treatment of both physical and mental illnesses. The lifespan of the average human was fairly short since many people had no protection from disease or from the natural elements.

Around the world, various cultures developed fairly sophisticated understandings of human health. For over 2,000 years, Chinese practitioners



The National Institute of Health runs a National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) and offers updated information on its Web site (www.nccam.nih.gov).

have helped people with *acupuncture* and various medicinal herbs. In India, *ayurvedic medicine* is practiced widely. It is based on a holistic view of the human body and mind. Many other cultures have long traditions of physical and spiritual healing.

Hippocrates is generally regarded as the founder of conventional medical practice. He lived in ancient Greece and instituted the Hippocratic Oath (discussed in Chapter 1). Since then, conventional medicine has developed—and is continuing to develop—cures based on examination, diagnosis, and treatment with medicines, various mechanical techniques, and/or surgery. Conventional medicine took a great leap forward in the mid-1800s when Joseph Lister, a British surgeon, began to understand and promote antiseptic surgery. Once antiseptics were understood thoroughly, many more lives were saved. From the early days of conventional medicine, it was most available to those with the money to go to professionals. In modern times, some countries consider health care a universal right, and others have made health care much more widely available than it has been in the past.

For centuries, many individuals did not have easy access to conventional medicine. Therefore, they turned to whatever folk medicine was available to them. Some of the practices in folk medicine were effective and some were not. Over time, some practitioners of conventional medicine as well as practitioners of alternative medicine have tried to incorporate those practices from folk medicine and from other cultures that seemed to be effective.

Because of heightened interest in alternative medicine, the government's National Institutes of Health has set up the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) to provide information, support research, and set standards. It is estimated that as much as 40 percent of the U.S. population uses some form of alternative or complementary medicine.

Types of Complementary and Alternative Medicine

NCCAM classifies CAM (complementary and alternative medicine) practices into five major types:

1. **Alternative medical systems**, which are complete systems of theory and practice.
2. **Mind-body interventions**, which use the mind's capacity to affect bodily function and symptoms.
3. **Biologically based therapies**, which use substances found in nature, such as herbs, foods, and vitamins.
4. **Manipulative and body-based therapies**, which are based on manipulation and/or movement of one or more parts of the body. This is sometimes called *natural healing*.
5. **Energy therapies**, which involve the use of energy fields.

Alternative Medical Systems

There are four major alternative medicine systems:

1. **Homeopathic medicine** is a system that believes that “like cures like.” Patients are treated with small, highly diluted quantities of medicinal substances that would actually cause those symptoms at higher doses.

It is theorized that the body reacts by healing itself in response to the smaller doses.

2. **Naturopathic medicine** theorizes that there is healing power within the body that can maintain and restore health. Naturopathic practitioners work to support this healing power through the use of nutritional counseling, supplements, exercise, and a combination of treatments from other alternative medicine practices.
3. **Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM)** is based on a concept of balanced *qi* (pronounced “chee”), or vital energy. It is believed that this energy regulates a person’s spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical balance through two opposing forces—yin (negative energy) and yang (positive energy). Disease is thought to result from yin and yang becoming imbalanced. Among the components of TCM are **acupuncture** (Figure 23-1), herbal and nutritional therapy, exercises, meditation, and massage. *Qi Gong* is one type of TCM that combines movement, meditation, and breathing.
4. **Ayurveda** emphasizes body, mind, and spirit in combination to prevent and treat disease. It has been practiced in India for 5,000 years and includes nutritional and herbal remedies and physical movement as well as meditation.

Mind-Body Interventions

Mind-body intervention techniques use the power of the mind to affect changes in body function and symptoms. Some mind-body interventions have moved from being part of complementary medicine and have become part of conventional medicine. Examples of this are behavioral therapy, which is widely used in certain mental illnesses and patient support groups and is now considered routine as part of the treatment of chronic illness.

Other techniques of mind-body intervention remain in the complementary and alternative medicine sphere. Meditation has been used on the Indian subcontinent for centuries. In studies, it has been shown that meditation can affect blood pressure and body temperature as well as other body functions. Prayer is regarded as an effective healing technique in some cases. Various therapies that use music, dance, and other creative outlets are used to change the course of some illnesses. In general, the power of the mind has been shown to play a role in the course of a disease.

Biologically Based Therapies

Biologically based therapies use food, herbs, vitamins, and minerals to relieve symptoms, maintain health, and, in some cases, cure diseases. Traditional Chinese medicine as well as medicines of other cultures have long used herbs to cure ailments and relieve symptoms. Many practitioners in the United States now use some of this ancient knowledge as well as more recent theories about vitamins, minerals, and dietary practices to provide guidance for preventing or healing disease. In addition, individuals are taking herbs and vitamins, often without specific guidance. The use of a particular substance for healing commonly spreads by word of mouth. For example, some people find relief from depression using the herb St. John’s Wort. Others use various minerals and vitamin combinations to relieve joint pain. Still others find that some plant extracts raise energy levels. There are problems with herbal medications in that they are not controlled by the FDA. Also many

The Web site of the National Center for Homeopathy (www.homeopathic.org) provides information on this type of therapy.



FIGURE 23-1 Acupuncturist treating a client.

MORE ABOUT . . .

St. John's Wort

It is rare for herbal medicines to be tested in scientific studies comparing them to popularly prescribed conventional medications. One exception is St. John's Wort, which in a German clinical trial was found to be as effective as the most popularly prescribed antidepressant. Herbal medicines are usually much cheaper to produce than conventional medications. Many people fail to mention herbal preparations to their doctors and many may have adverse interactions with medications. One of the goals of NCCAM is to study more biologically based therapies to see how they measure up against conventional medicines.

Individuals forget to mention they are taking herbals to their physicians, either because they do not think they are important or because they forget they are taking them. Sometimes they do not tell the doctor because they think the doctor will not approve. This can lead to complications and drug interactions. It is very important to convey this information to your physician to prevent interactions or overtreatment for your condition.



FIGURE 23-2 A chiropractor explaining treatment to a patient.



FIGURE 23-3 A massage therapist giving a back massage.

Manipulation and Body-Based Methods

The two major types of manipulation or body-based methods are **chiropractic** and **therapeutic massage**. Chiropractic focuses primarily on the relationship between alignment of the body (particularly of the spine) and overall health. Chiropractors attempt to align the spine by moving the body in various ways, especially by turning the neck so as to position it properly (Figure 23-2).

Chiropractic uses many treatments and modalities in addition to manipulation by force. Some of the other chiropractic modalities or treatments include light force adjustments, activators, special tables for traction, and drop tables that allow the chiropractor to use less force to accomplish the same adjustment. Some chiropractors use a computerized tool called a precision adjuster that first measures the alignment and the problem areas then delivers a specific force to adjust the spin in the direction needed. They may also use the application of hot and cold, electrical stimulation and magnets to relax the muscles allowing the body to go back into alignment easier and stay in alignment longer.

Therapeutic massage (Figure 23-3) stimulates the skin, muscles, and connective tissue by manipulation. It promotes healing and a feeling of well-being. There are many different types of therapeutic massage techniques and modalities. Massage therapy has been around for a long time. There are many styles and types of massages and massage strokes, including Swedish massage, relaxation massage, deep tissue massage, therapeutic massage, pregnancy massage, reflexology, aromatherapy, infant massage, geriatric massage, sports massage and many, many others. All massage starts with touch. The style, depth, speed, and type of stroke is what makes the major difference. A relaxation massage is mostly long, gentle, gliding strokes called *effleurage*. A deep tissue or therapeutic massage will use *effleurage* strokes but will also include *petrissage* (kneading

strokes or compression), *friction*, and *tapotement* (percussion or tapping of the body). It is important for clients to find a massage therapist that has a touch and technique that they like. It is also a good idea for clients to check the therapist's credentials and training. A deep tissue massage does not have to hurt to go deep. Some therapists add scented essential oils to help the client relax depending on the goal of the massage. For example lavender is relaxing and can help a client relax.

Massage therapy can help with a lot of physical problems. It is also contraindicated in some conditions. For example, in an acute injury, the injured area should not be massaged for 48 hours. Pregnant women should not get a massage in the first trimester. If either the therapist or client is not sure if a particular massage is contraindicated, a medical doctor should be consulted. It is also important that the therapist know of any medical conditions so as not to harm the client unintentionally. A massage therapist may ask for a note from the physician before giving a client a massage.

Energy Therapies

Energy therapies are divided into two types. The first, **biofield therapy**, attempts to affect the energy fields that are assumed to surround the human body. One example of a biofield therapy is **therapeutic touch**, the laying on of hands. It is based on the belief that passing the healer's hands through the energy fields surrounding the body will help heal imbalances. Another example is **reiki**, a Japanese form of therapy in which energy is passed from the healer to the patient, who is thought to be healed in this process. There are many other types of energy therapies, such as *quantum touch* and *healing touch*, which are used successfully to help some people.

The second type of energy therapy is **bioelectromagnetic-based therapy**. This involves the use of electromagnetic fields, such as pulsed fields, magnetic fields, or AC- or DC-current fields.

The American Chiropractic Association (www.amerchiro.org) is the largest organization promoting chiropractic care.

Alternative Medicine Coding

Coding systems have been developed for use in CAM and nursing. An ABC coding system for CAM can be found at Alternative Link's Web site (www.alternativelink.com). It is estimated that there are 3 million alternative healthcare practitioners in the United States. The market for their services is continuing to increase. Currently, many insurance companies will pay for chiropractic care but not for many of the other CAM therapies. However, as the popularity of many of these methods increases, the willingness of health insurance companies to pay for alternative services will also increase. As it increases, coding for CAM will become standardized.

VOCABULARY REVIEW

In the previous section, you learned terms relating to complementary and alternative medicine. Before going on to the exercises, review the following terms and refer to the previous section if you have any questions. Pronunciations are provided for certain terms. Sometimes information about where the word came from is included after the term. These etymologies (word histories) are for your information only. You do not need to memorize them.

Term	Definition
acupuncture [ă-kyū-PŪNK-chūr]	Originally Chinese therapy that uses fine needles.
alternative medical system	Complete system of medical treatment outside the realm of conventional medicine.
alternative medicine	Medical therapies outside the realm of conventional medicine.
ayurveda [ī-yūr-VĀ-dă, ī-yūr-VĒ-dă]	Holistic alternative medicine system originally from India.
bioelectromagnetic-based therapy	Type of energy therapy that uses electromagnetic fields.
biofield therapy	Type of energy therapy that attempts to affect energy fields.
biologically based therapy	The use of foods, herbs, vitamins, and minerals to heal or prevent disease.
body-based therapy	See <i>manipulative therapy</i> .
CAM	Complementary and alternative medicine.
chiropractic [kī-rō-PRĀK-tĭk]	Therapy based on alignment of the body (particularly the spine).
complementary medicine	A nonconventional medical practice used in combination with conventional medicine.
energy therapy	Therapy that uses energy fields.
homeopathic [hō-mē-ō-PĀTH-ĭk] medicine	Medical system that uses diluted doses of substances to stimulate immunity.
manipulative therapy	Therapy that uses manipulation of the body to treat patients.
mind-body intervention	Therapy that uses the power of the mind to affect the body.
naturopathic [nă-chūr-ō-PĀTH-ĭk] medicine	Therapy that uses the body's own healing powers to maintain and restore health.
reiki [RĀ-kē]	Therapy that uses touch from a healer.
therapeutic massage	Stimulates the skin, muscles, and tissue to promote healing.
therapeutic touch	The laying on of hands to promote healing.
traditional Chinese medicine	Various practices that promote balance between yin and yang to promote and maintain health.

CASE STUDY

Working in a CAM office

Julie started a new job as an office assistant to Dr. Mira Sanchez, a chiropractor with a small practice. Dr. Sanchez shares an office with Jim Wilson, a trained massage therapist, and Fouad Sharma, a nutritional counselor who often recommends herbal preparations. Julie will serve as receptionist and office clerk for all three practitioners. An important part of Julie's job is to take medical histories of new patients as well as to explain

to patients about insurance reimbursement if any is available.

Critical Thinking

1. Should the medical histories include a list of medications?
2. Julie knows a lot about vitamins and herbs. Should she discuss any of these with patients?

COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE EXERCISES

Fill in the Blank

Complete the sentences below.

3. Originally a system of Indian medicine, _____ is now a type of alternative medical system.
4. In traditional Chinese medicine, balance between _____ and _____ is considered essential.
5. Spinal manipulation is routinely performed by _____.
6. Therapeutic touch uses _____ fields while therapeutic _____ uses manipulation.
7. Any type of alternative therapy used in conjunction with conventional medicine is called _____ medicine.
8. Stimulating immunity by using diluted doses takes place in _____ medicine.
9. A Japanese energy therapy is called _____.
10. St. John's Wort is used to relieve _____.

USING THE INTERNET

Go to NCCAM's Web site (www.nccam.nih.gov) and find information about one type of complementary or alternative medicine. Explain how the therapy is expected to heal or prevent disease.

CHAPTER REVIEW

The material that follows is to help you review this chapter.

DEFINITIONS

Define the following terms. Review the chapter before starting. Make sure you know how to pronounce each term as you define it.

TERM

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| 11. acupuncture
[ă-kyū-PŪNK-chūr] | 17. biologically based therapy | 24. manipulative therapy |
| 12. alternative medical system | 18. body-based therapy | 25. mind-body intervention |
| 13. alternative medicine | 19. CAM | 26. naturopathic [nă-chūr-ō-
PĀTH-ĭk] medicine |
| 14. ayurveda [ī-yūr-VĀ-dă,
ī-yūr-VĒ-dă] | 20. chiropractic [kī-rō-PRĀK-tĭk] | 27. reiki [RĀ-kē] |
| 15. bioelectromagnetic-based
therapy | 21. complementary medicine | 28. therapeutic massage |
| 16. biofield therapy | 22. energy therapy | 29. therapeutic touch |
| | 23. homeopathic [hō-mē-ō-
PĀTH-ĭk] medicine | 30. traditional Chinese medicine |