

COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE AN OVERVIEW

P. Narendra Babu, M. Shankar*, M. Niranjan Babu

Department of Pharmaceutical Chemistry, Seven Hills College of Pharmacy, Venkataramapuram, Tirupati-517561, Andhra Pradesh, India.

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ABSTRACT

Alternative Medicine is defined as a variety of therapeutic or preventive health care practices, such as homeopathy, naturopathy, chiropractic, and herbal medicine that do not follow generally accepted medical methods and may not have a scientific explanation for their effectiveness. Complementary and alternative medicine is the term for medical products and practices that are not part of standard care. Standard care is what medical doctors, doctors of osteopathy and allied health professionals, such as registered nurses and physical therapists, practice. Alternative medicine means treatments that you use instead of standard ones. Complementary medicine means nonstandard treatments that you use along with standard ones.

INTRODUCTION

Alternative Medicine is a term commonly used to include all the healing practice that does not fall within the realm of conventional medicine. It can be defined as a variety of therapeutic or preventive health care practices, such as homeopathy, naturopathy, chiropractic, and herbal medicine that do not follow generally accepted medical methods and may not have a scientific explanation for their effectiveness. Complementary and alternative medicine is the term for medical products and practices that are not part of standard care. Standard care is what medical doctors, doctors of osteopathy and allied health professionals, such as registered nurses and physical therapists. Complementary medicine means nonstandard treatments that you use along with standard ones [1].

Alternative medicine is distinct from complementary medicine which is meant to accompany, not to replace, standard medical practices. Alternative medical practices are generally not recognized by the medical community as standard or conventional medical approaches.

Alternative medicine includes dietary supplements, megadose vitamins, herbal preparations, special teas, massage therapy, magnet therapy, and spiritual healing [2].

AYURVEDA

Ayurveda is the oldest medical system available on the planet today. It is a science of life, prevention and longevity. It was written 5000 years ago in India and is preserved till date. It contained information of medicinal herbs to treat various diseases known to man. The ancient healing techniques were part of the Santana dharma (universal religion), or Vedic religion. Veda Vaasa, the famous sage, put into writing the complete knowledge of Ayurveda, along with the more directly spiritual insights of self realization into a body of scriptural literature called the Vedas and the Vedic literatures. There were originally four main books of spirituality, which included among other topics, health, astrology, spiritual business, government, army, poetry and spiritual living and behavior. These books are known as the four Vedas; Rik, Sama, Yajur and Atharva. The Rik Veda contains verses on the nature of health and disease, pathogenesis and principles of treatment. The Atreya Samhita is one of the oldest medical books in the world. Ayurveda makes use of

Corresponding Author

M. Shankar

Email: - shankarmanichellappa2014@gmail.com



herbs, foods, aromas, gems, colors, yoga, mantras, lifestyle and surgery. Three main Ayurvedic texts that are still used today are the Charak Samhita, Sushrut Samhita and the Ashtanga Hridaya Samhita. Yoga is widely used now a days, though it is described in ayurvedic text [3].

It focuses on balance of the mind, body, and spirit. Hundreds of different herbs are used to:

- Protect the body against disease
- Relieve pain
- Improve general health

The evidence

Most studies performed have been small. They cannot provide conclusive evidence that Ayurvedic herbal medicine works.

There's also a serious caution to using Ayurvedic products. One study found that Ayurvedic herbal medicines from South Asia had dangerously high levels of:

- Lead
- Mercury
- Arsenic

Ayurveda is a part of the Indian system of Yoga. This ancient science deals with the healing of the human body and mind to achieve optimum balance between the body, mind and consciousness. The system tries to fix various imbalances in the body and makes use of herbs and natural products to treat the body. This system is used in conjunction with the ancient Indian system of Yoga Asanas and breathing exercises to gain optimum results [4].

Basic principles of ayurveda and its philosophy states that Human body is made up of five principles. These are Air (Akasa), Vital Force (Vayu), Minerals, Acids, Alkalies etc (Tejas), Water (Jala) and Organic substances and Earthy matter (Prithvi). In Ayurveda, combination of these principles is classified into three: Vayu – Vata-Mayu or Pitta- Valasa – Kapha. The First is a combination of Air and Vital Force, The second is Minerals, acids and alkalies and the third is a combination of Water and Organic matter. These three Mega Divisions (Tridhatu) build and sustain all parts of the body. One Dhatu (Mega Division) may be more active in one part of the body compared to the other. Ayurveda recognizes this difference and balance which keeps the body healthy. When these Mega divisions are displaced or in imbalance due to factors like food, age, various daily activities, time and place, they cause disease [5].

There are three kinds of impurities in Ayurveda

- Vata – Excessively vitiated gasses
- Pitta – Fluids of gall bladder and accumulated wastes.
- Slesma – Phlegm or mucus in the mouth, throat and a few other impurities like albumen in the urine. Disease in the initial stages is treated by alleviation. The imbalances are treated by pacifying them without eliminating them from the body. When the disease is very

pronounced, there is no recourse except to eliminate the same from the body. The ayurvedic doctor this to find out the cause of such disease and eliminate it from the source.

The Pacification of the imbalance can be undertaken by the Ayurveda doctor after studying the pulse of the patient. He looks for intensity, pattern, kind of throbbing and other complex variations to understand where the possible cause of the problem can be. The treatment is with a combination of natural herbs and minerals ingested or inhaled and Yoga Asanas. The herbs and minerals are normally not processed as per modern medicine but comparatively raw. These heavy minerals and herbs can be effective in fixing some common ailments but should be taken under supervision or can cause damage to internal organs. Careful monitoring by a trained person can give lasting benefits.

The Elimination of the imbalance to get to the root of the problem causing the disease is a complex process. The Panchkarma' treatment is a specialized tool in Ayurveda employed for the purpose of 'Elimination. As the name suggests it comprises of five basic steps:

- Vamana- Emesis
- Virechana- Purgation
- Vasti – Enema
- Nasya- Enrhine therapy, and
- Rakta Moksha- Bloodletting

This treatment works on the principle of removing deep seated toxins from the body causing imbalance and is recommended 3 times a year – at the turn of spring, autumn and winter. A healthy person is recommended this treatment once a year to rejuvenate and revitalize the body by bringing into balance various constituents.

Preparatory procedures

Internal Oleation and Lubrication with various herbal oils and clarified butter taken orally. External lubrication with massages, oil gargles, Oiling of the ear canal etc. Therapeutic heat to induce perspiration and removing impurities through sweat glands.

Main Treatment

It consists of Emesis (therapeutic cleaning of the upper orifice of the alimentary canal), Purgation (Removal of waste from lower orifice), Enema (Therapeutic cleaning of the large intestine and bladder via medicated enema), Nasal application of ayurvedic medicines and Bloodletting.

CHINESE HERBAL MEDICINES

Chinese herbal medicines include ginkgo and ginseng. They are not used to treat a specific symptom or disease. Instead they are meant to restore balance to the body as a whole. These medicines can be taken in many forms, including pills, powders, and teas.

The evidence



Chinese herbal remedies have been studied for treating conditions such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes. But the research hasn't been well-designed enough to draw any conclusions on effectiveness. Regarding safety, there have been reports of heavy metals and other toxins in certain Chinese herbal remedies [6].

A number of different herbs are grown right here in the U.S. or in Europe that are considered Western or traditional herbal remedies. Most studies on these herbs have been small. So it's hard to know for sure whether they work. A few herbs that have shown possible benefit include:

- Chamomile for relieving stomach upset
- Cranberry for preventing urinary tract infections
- Flaxseed, garlic, and soy for lowering cholesterol
- Peppermint oil for preventing heartburn
- St. John's wort for relieving mild to moderate depression

Although herbal remedies are considered natural, they can cause side effects. They may also interact with drugs you're taking for other conditions [6].

UNANI

Unani medicine is another old methodology of treatment of diseases. Unani system of medicine was originated in Greece. Aesculapius is said to be the originator of this system. Hippocrates (460-377 BC), a Greek philosopher – Physician formed the theoretical framework of Unani Medicine. He is said to be a descendent of Aesculapius and regarded as 'father of Unani medicine'. Galen (131-210 AD) was another scholar who worked for developing Unani medicine. Unani system is a science which deals with the preventive and promotive aspects of human being and health problems occurred by the Ecological and Environmental factors. It teaches to maintain the health and treat the disease by bringing back the balance in imbalance humours [7].

Cell proliferation from vein walls. Henschen, Considered IPEH, as a hyperplastic reaction induced by blood stasis and perivascular inflammation and named it as Thrombopoietic proliferations endovasculitis. Silver and Salyer [3] (1985): Considered IPEH, as atypical manifestations of an organizing thrombus, which is more a pseudotumoral lesion and called it intravascular angiomatosis. Clearkin and Enzinger [4] Supported Salyer's theory and suggested the term IPEH. They stated that the altered blood flow induces formation of thrombus with a subsequent organization and recanalisation. Mc Clatchy [5] described that IPEH, was due to a reactive proliferation of endothelial cells, associated with exuberant organization and recanalisation of thrombus. Lever [6] suggested that the reactive and exaggerated attempt to recanalise in thrombus to be due to a basic fibroblast growth factor. The vasoformative cells of IPEH are thought to originate either from blood monocytes or the thrombosed vessel endothelium. A lymphatic vessel

counterpart was reported in 1979 in a cystic lymphatic malformation.

Some authors have suggested the role of trauma as a predisposing factor especially at sites susceptible to trauma such as lips and tongue. However, such an association has been seen in only 4-7% of case of oral lesions. A female predilection is suggested to be probably

In India, Unani is a popular form of alternative medicine and Unani doctors can practice as qualified doctors. Like Ayurveda, Unani too is based on the presence of classical elements in the human body. According to the belief, the elements are present in different fluids and their imbalance leads to ailment. Most medicines are made of herbs and food. The base of most Unani medicines is honey. Honey is believed to be endowed with healing properties [8].

Unani medicine is an alternative approach to medical treatment that is practiced largely in India and whose principles are not dissimilar from those of Ayurvedic medicine. The philosophy behind the approach is said to be based on the teachings of Hippocrates, Avicenna and Galen. Unani medicine holds that the human body is comprised of four humors that determine an individual's personality, body type and other mental and physical characteristics. These four humors are: balgham, which corresponds with phlegm; dam, or blood; safra, or yellow bile and sauda, or black bile. Sickness and disease are said to result from imbalances in these humors.

A Unani practitioner will diagnose a patient's condition in terms of a surplus or deficit of one or more of the four humors and attempt to address symptoms and ultimately cure a condition by administering herbs capable of reestablishing harmony between balgham, dam, safra and sauda. Herbs used are very similar to those used in Ayurveda treatment and similarities are often drawn between the concept of the four humors and that of the tridosha system in Ayurvedic medicine.

Besides the use of herbs for treatment, Unani medicine employs a variety of other techniques intended to cleanse the body and restore humor balance. These techniques include: mushil (purging), taareeq (sweating), hammam (bath therapy), munzij (ripening), mahajim (cupping) and riyazat (exercise). Of these, purging is among the most common as Unani medicine often considers imbalances to be the result of metabolic changes in the body. Mushil attempts to convert the impurities formed from these changes into tangible matter that can be expelled from the body by the purging process.

Treatment

- Regimental Therapy: It includes venesection, cupping, diaphoresis, diuresis, turkish bath, massage, cauterisation, purging, emesis, exercise and leeching.
- Dietotherapy: It deals with certain ailments by administration of specific diets or by regulating the quantity and quality of food.



- Pharmacotherapy: It deals with the use of naturally occurring drugs mostly herbal drugs of animal and mineral origin. Single drugs or their combination in raw form are preferred over compound formulations.
- Unani pathy has shown remarkable results in curing diseases like Arthritis, Leucoderma, Jaundice, Bronchial Asthma, Filariasis and several other acute and chronic diseases where other systems do not give the desired level of positive response. The Unani system is a secular system in character and is popular among the masses.

HOMEOPATHY

Homeopathy, another system of medicine was discovered by Samuel Hahnemann (1755-1843) a German physician. Homeopathy is derived from the Greek word *homio*, meaning like, and *pathos*, meaning suffering. Homeopathic medicines treat illness by going with, rather than against, symptoms that are seen as the body's natural defenses. Samuel Hahnemann was experimenting with cinchona bark as a cure for malaria. When he himself administered Cinchona, he developed symptoms of malaria. But when he gave quinine to the patients suffering from malaria like symptoms, it helped to fight the illness. Besides these developed systems other techniques like Acupressure, Acupuncture, Aromatherapy and Naturopathy are other alternative medicines available to cure diseases [9].

The name, homeopathy, comes from the Greek word *homio*, meaning like, and *pathos*, meaning suffering. Homeopathic medicines treat illness by going with, rather than against, symptoms that are seen as the body's natural defenses. In contrast, "allopathic" or conventional medicine acts by suppressing the symptoms of illness. The underlying principle of homeopathy is like may be cured by like. That is, a homeopathic substance will produce symptoms in a healthy person that may be used to treat a sick person who has the same symptoms. This principle is used to some degree in conventional therapies, such as immunizations and allergy treatments. The second principle of homeopathy is the minimum dose. In testing the properties of various substances, Hahnemann found that by diluting the substance potentizing it -- the remedy worked more effectively. In fact, the more dilute the substance, the greater became its effect or cure, without side effects. Hahnemann theorized that the homeopathic substance, even in infinitesimal amounts, worked by stimulating what he termed the vital life force, a type of energy that he believed animates all living things. The third principle of homeopathy is its focus on the patient as a whole. In addition to physical symptoms, Hahnemann's proving included an extensive listing of the patient's emotional state. Homeopathic doctors consider the patient's total experience, both mental and physical symptoms and the individual's emotional state, in searching for the appropriate homeopathic substance. A homeopathic practitioner often seeks out what may seem like irrelevant information, such as unusual food cravings,

aversion to particular weather conditions, or the time of day that symptoms appear. Homeopathic medicines, commonly referred to as remedies, may come from the plant, mineral, or animal kingdom.

Some common remedies include

Arnica Montana, from the Leopard's bane plant; belladonna, from the deadly nightshade plant; calcarea, calcium carbonate from oyster shells; sepia, from cuttlefish ink; and the element, sulphur.

Homeopathic remedies are produced using the dilution principles. In a common dilution of 1:100, one drop of the homeopathic substance is added to 99 drops of water and/or alcohol. The mixture is then potentized by a process called succession repeated tapping on a hard surface for a specific length of time. Remedies may be diluted up to 1000 times, leaving only an infinitesimal trace of the substance. Remedies are typically diluted 10,100, or 1,000 times, which translate into potencies that are marked with the Roman numerals X, C, and M. Homeopathic remedies range from 6X as the lowest potency to 1M or more as the highest potency. The dilutions advocated by Hahnemann and those used today often reduce the concentration of the initial substance to infinitesimal levels. Hahnemann himself understood that dilutions of the magnitude he used eliminated all of the original substance. He believed, however, that the healing power of the substance could be preserved and actually concentrated by the process of dynamization [10].

Homeopaths generally begin with detailed examinations of their patients' histories, including questions regarding their physical, mental and emotional states, their life circumstances and any physical or emotional illnesses. The homeopath then attempts to translate this information into a complex formula of mental and physical symptoms, including likes, dislikes, innate predispositions and even body type. From these symptoms, the homeopath chooses how to treat the patient. A compilation of reports of many homeopathic provings, supplemented with clinical data, is known as a homeopathic materia medica. But because a practitioner first needs to explore the remedies for a particular symptom rather than looking up the symptoms for a particular remedy, the homeopathic repertory, which is an index of symptoms, lists after each symptom those remedies that are associated with it. Repertories are often very extensive and may include data extracted from multiple sources of materia medica. There is often lively debate among compilers of repertories and practitioners over the veracity of a particular inclusion [11].

ACUPRESSURE

Chinese medicine has developed acupuncture, acupressure, herbal remedies, diet, exercise, lifestyle changes, and other remedies as part of its healing methods. Nearly all of the forms of Oriental medicine that are used in the West today, including acupuncture, acupressure,



shiatsu, and Chinese herbal medicine, have their roots in Chinese medicine. Acupressure is the noninvasive form of acupuncture. The goal with Acupressure is to learn the points that will produce the Healing Response for the conditions we want to fix.¹²

Meridian is a word borrowed from geography indicating a thin line joining a series of ordered points. There are 12 main meridians, one assigned to each of the five organs, the six bowels, and the pericardium or heart constrictor. Qi flows through channels located near the surface of the body.

Another name for channels is meridians, or meridian points. There are 12 channels linked to specific organs, such as the liver, heart, and kidneys. Acupoints or pressure points are located on the channels. When precise pressure is exerted onto an acupoint, the gate is opened and flows through. In our modern lifestyle lack of sufficient muscular activities gives rise to various physical problems. Unbalanced food and abuse of natural routine of the body add to the problems. Acupressure has beneficial effects in curing many diseases. These diseases may include metabolic disorders, body deformity, inflammation of body tissues, digestion related problems, and heart related problems and problems with nervous system, to name a few.

The acupuncture technique that has been most studied scientifically involves penetrating the skin with thin, solid, metallic needles that are manipulated by the hands or by electrical stimulation. The needles are extremely fine, about the size of a thick hair. The needles are solid and nothing is injected through them. Over the centuries, very refined needle insertion techniques have been developed which enable the skilled acupuncture practitioner to place a needle with little or no sensation. In some cases, the needles are not used. This may occur during the treatment of sensitive adults or children. The use of electronic stimulation works with equal effectiveness as the needle. Acupuncture has been shown to stimulate the immune system. It also has affects the circulation, blood pressure, rhythm and stroke volume of the heart, secretion of the gastric acid and production of red and white cells. It stimulates the release of a variety of hormones that help body to respond to injury and stress.

This traditional Chinese medicine technique uses thin needles to stimulate various points around the body. Each point corresponds to a specific condition. The aim of acupuncture is to restore a balance of energy and good health to the body.

Uses of acupuncture

More study needs to be done into the benefits of acupuncture. However, evidence suggests that acupuncture holds promise for relieving vomiting caused by cancer chemotherapy. It also may help ease some chronic pain conditions, including: 22

- Headaches
- Low back pain

- Osteoarthritis of the knee

Body Aches and Pains, Sinus Problems, Chronic Fatigue & Insomnia, Joint Pain and Sport Injuries, Back and Neck Pain/Stiffness, Stress and Anxiety Related Disorders, Digestive Disorders (Acidity, Constipation, Gas, Bloating), Acute and chronic pain relief, Migraine, Tension, cluster and sinus headaches, Trigeminal neuralgia, Bladder dysfunction, Bed wetting, Cervical (neck) pain, Mid-back pain, Low back pain, Shoulder pain, Tennis elbow, Post-operative pain relief, Gastric problems, Asthma, Allergies, Skin conditions, Hemorrhoids, Abnormal blood pressure, Chronic fatigue syndrome, Anxiety and Neurological syndromes.

NATUROPATHY

Naturopathy deals with the healing power of nature since it believes that all healing powers are within our body. This means that within every human being there is a healing energy, which includes our immune system in the complete sense of both the physical and the psyche, which is responsible for our wellness and our ability to heal and maintain health. We fall ill only when we go against Nature. Naturopathy deals with expelling the cause of diseases (toxins) from the body to cure it. Fasting is one of the best natural methods in which an ailing body can purify and recoup itself.¹³It is a drugless healing process which propagates ways to stay healthy in accordance to the laws of nature. The origin of Indian Naturopathy can be traced back to the Vedic period. In the Vedic period dietary discipline (Pathya and Ahara) and the principles of health (Swastha and Vurtha) described in ayurveda have developed into present day Indian Naturopathy. Even today strictly vegetarian food is served as part of therapy as per the doctor or dietician's prescription. Use of Alcohol, smoking, chewing tobacco, and the consumption of tea, coffee, and non-vegetarian foods are forbidden in this treatment [12]

There are various naturopathy centers all over India and other countries which require the visitor (patient) to stay on campus, for a duration that depends upon the nature of his or her complaint. Some naturopathy centers prescribe a minimum stay of ten days, as they say that no significant effect can be observed within a shorter period [13].

Rishikesh in India is called the yoga capital of the world and there are many ashrams in Rishikesh offering courses on meditation, yoga and Hindu philosophy. The International Yoga Festival is organized every year from February 2 to 7 by the state tourism. Kerala, in the southernmost tip of India, is noted, among many other things, for its Ayurvedic resorts that draw a large number of tourists every year [14].

Lemon and Naturopathy

For cough, cold and fever, lemon is very effective. Squeeze a lemon in a glass full of water and drink repeatedly. This will cure all of the three ailments.



But if the fever is high and makes one thirsty, boil the water. This will bring down the fever and reduce the thirst. If the cold is severe, it can be added to the required amount of honey in the above mixture. Another very beneficial method is as follows: cut a lemon in half, add in it salt, ground black pepper and powdered molasses. Heat this and squeeze the juice directly on the tongue. To remove the freckles on the face, rub a piece of lemon on them and they will lighten considerably. Sprinkling a little alum on the lemon works wonders for the complexion. Rubbing half a lemon on the teeth not only makes the teeth shiny and bright but will also cure bad breath. To reduce the body weight add a little salt and one lemon to 350 ml of lukewarm water and drink daily on an empty stomach. You can also substitute honey to salt [15].

Milk and Naturopathy

Milk should ideally be consumed in the morning since it is believed that the heat of the sun helps in digestion of milk. Adding sugar to milk is very harmful since it not only induces phlegm, it also destroys the calcium content in it. It should be drunk at room temperature if possible. However, if one prefers warm milk, then do not overheat it. Overheating destroys all its beneficial elements. For the sweetening of milk and easy digestion, one can add honey to it. If one is suffering from cough, constipation, diarrhea, stomachache, or indigestion, he/she should avoid consumption of milk. For acidity, drink cold milk twice a day. For hiccups, it is advised to warm a glass of milk and drink. In addition, for tiredness, a glass of warm milk will prove effective. For wrinkles, pimples and blemishes, warm milk can be applied. After half an hour, wash the face with clean water. One has to do it regularly before sleeping at night; then it will solve the problem and improve the complexion. Adding a little saffron to a spoonful of fresh milk and applying it on the lips will cure their darkness and make them softer. If one is suffering from an itchy rash, add a little water to some milk and apply on the rash with cotton wool and then wash. It will stop the itch and cure the rash [16].

Salt and Naturopathy

Salt is good only in small quantities and rock salt is better than sea salt. Eating excessive salt weakens the gums and is also the cause of body odor. Due to excessive consumption of salt, body cells die, and when these dead cells come out through the pores with perspiration, the odor is very strong and foul. To help the situation, one can consume salt in very small quantities. Salt is very drying; hence, excessive amounts of salt will cause unnatural thirst. But it can be very beneficial as well. In a headache keep a pinch of salt on the tongue or smell a mixture of three grams of salt in one-fourth cup of water. For a stomachache, mix half a spoon salt in a glass of hot water and drink. This will not only cure the pain but will also remove the cause of the pain. For softening the skin, wet

the skin and take a fistful of salt and rub in circular motions and then wash. It is advised to do it once a week and it will slough off dead skin, thus making it soft. For cracking heels or rough feet, soak the feet in warm water by adding some salt to it.

Soil and Naturopathy

Mud is one of five elements of nature having immense impact on the body in health as well as in sickness. It can be employed conveniently as a therapeutic agent in Naturopathy treatment as its black color absorbs all the colors of the sun and conveys them to the body. Secondly, as the mud retains moisture for a long time, when applied over the body part it causes cooling. Thirdly, its shape and consistency can be changed easily by adding water. Moreover, it is cheap and easily available. Mud procured for treatment purpose should be black cotton soil with greasiness and free from pollution and contamination. Before use mud should be dried, powdered and sieved to separate stones, grass particles and other impurities. Today however, naturopathy is very different in its approach. Our soil and air have been denatured by modern technology and war, the processing of food has devitalised the raw materials given to us by nature and chemicals added to our food are often very harmful. Naturopathy has had to evolve to deal with this artificial environment that we have created; so the birth of supplements and nutritional products to supplement our diets and to cleanse us from the chemicals in our soil, Water and air has become essential [17].

AROMATHERAPY

Aromatherapy is the use of essential oils from plants for healing purposes. Essential oils have been used for therapeutic purposes for nearly 6,000 years. The ancient Chinese, Indians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans used essential oils in cosmetics, perfumes, and drugs. Essential oils were also commonly used for spiritual, therapeutic, hygienic, and ritualistic purposes. In the last century French chemist Renee Maurice Gattefosse developed aroma as a therapy when he discovered the therapeutic power of essential oils extracted from lavender flowers. It includes use of essential oils distilled from plants and flowers for healing various disorders especially those causing stress. In this Assessment is done on the basis of patient's physical conditions: digestion, sleep, and support system, are taken into consideration including the conditions of heart, mind and spirit. Essential oils are concentrated extracts taken from the roots, leaves, or blossoms of plants. Each essential oil contains its own mix of active ingredients, and this mix determines the healing properties of the oil. The essential oil derived from orange blossom, for example, contains a large amount of ester, an active ingredient thought to induce a calming effect. Researchers are not entirely clear how aromatherapy works, but many experts believe that our sense of smell



plays a very important role. This sense is incredibly powerful.

According to some estimates, it is about 10,000 times stronger than any other sense. The smell receptors in our nose communicate with two structures that are embedded deep in our brain and serve as storehouses for emotions and memories. These structures are called the amygdala and hippocampus. When essential oil molecules are inhaled, they affect these parts of the brain directly. Researchers believe that stimulation of these structures influences our physical, emotional, and mental health. For example, lavender is believed to stimulate the activity of brain cells in the amygdala in the same way that certain sedative medications work.

To take treatment which involves taking essential oils by mouth only from specially trained professionals. Pregnant women in their first trimester and patients with asthma or history of allergy should avoid all types of essential oils. Pregnant women as well as people with a history of seizures should avoid hyssop oil. People with high blood pressure should avoid use of stimulating essential oils such as rosemary and spike lavender. Those with estrogen-dependent tumors (such as breast or ovarian cancer) should not use oils with estrogen-like compounds such as fennel, aniseed, sage, and clary-sage [18].

Bach Flower Therapy

The Bach Flower therapy (pronounced as 'Batch') is an innovative healing modality, discovered by Dr. Edward Bach between 1930-1936. It is not intended to treat, diagnose or cure any illness or disease as on the lines of modern medical science, rather it offers a simple system of eliminating behavioral negativities by taking into account your overall nature, personality traits and attitude towards life -irrespective of your disease or illhealth condition. Reigning behavioral negativities like frustration, guilty feeling or jealousy-- which accumulate at the core of our psyche over a duration of time as in the form of negative emotions and incessantly make us emotionally imbalanced, are considered to be the root cause of all our sufferings [19].

According to Bach Flower Therapy, often any ailment or ill-health condition at most of the time and in majority of the cases is the result or expression of persistent "emotional imbalance" that takes place at the core of your psyche and persists over a period of time due to gradual accumulation of numerous Negative Emotions, those originates either from your mind itself or from your surrounding circumstances. As soon as your mental state improves, the physical trouble disappears. Therefore a person who implies his overall nature, his general attitude towards life and his inimitable surrounding circumstances is more important than his disease or ill health condition.

Our mental make-up and overall attitude towards life are equally important as your symptoms of diseases or illness. Although invisible through naked eyes, our behavioral negativities OR emotional imbalances are real

and we can perceive their effects on our lives in the form of pains or pleasures associated with them. It's not that person's fault if he or she is emotionally imbalanced. Their innate nature and existing hostile circumstances are equally responsible. Emotional imbalance is not a sign of weakness. "Emotional imbalance" at times is natural. For most of the people, it is the fear, shame, and embarrassment that often prevent them from seeking help for their emotional imbalances. Most of the people get surprised to learn that other family members had dealt either one or more times in their life with the same problem that they are facing right in present day.

CHROMOTHERAPY

Chromotherapy, sometimes called color therapy colorology or cromatherapy, is an alternative medicine method. It is claimed that a therapist trained in chromotherapy can use color and light to balance energy wherever a person's body be lacking, be it physical, emotional, spiritual, or mental. Avicenna (980-1037), who viewed color to be of vital importance in diagnosis and treatment, discussed chromotherapy in The Canon of Medicine. He wrote that "Color is an observable symptom of disease" and also developed a chart that related color to the temperature and physical condition of the body. His view was that red moved the blood, blue or white cooled it, and yellow reduced muscular pain and inflammation. He further discussed the properties of colors for healing and was the first to establish that the wrong color suggested for therapy would elicit no response in specific diseases.

As an example he observed that a person with a nosebleed should not gaze at things of a brilliant red color and should not be exposed to red light because this would stimulate the sanguineous humor, whereas blue would soothe it and reduce blood flow. In the 19th century, healers claimed colored glass filters could treat many diseases including constipation and meningitis. Photobiology, the term for the contemporary scientific study of the effects of light on humans, has replaced the term chromotherapy in an effort to separate it from its roots in Victorian mysticism and to strip it of its associations with symbolism and magic. Light therapy is a specific treatment approach using high intensity light to treat specific sleep, skin and mood disorders. Ayurvedic medicine describes the body as having seven main chakras, which are spiritual centers located along the spine that are associated with a color, function and organ or bodily system. According to this explanation, these colors can become imbalanced and result in physical diseases but these imbalances can be corrected through using the appropriate color as a treatment. The purported colors and their associations are described as:

HYDROTHERAPY

Hydrotherapy, formerly called hydrophathy involves the use of water for pain-relief and treating



illness. The term hydrotherapy itself is synonymous with the term Water cure as it was originally marketed by practitioners and promoters in the 1800s. Water cure has since come to have two opposing definitions, which can cause confusion.

(a) A course of medical treatment by hydrotherapy

(b) A form of torture in which a person is forced to drink large quantities of water.

The sense used in this article is the first one, namely 'Water cure (therapy)', synonymous with the term hydrotherapy, and which precedes recorded use of the second sense. Hydrotherapy in general encompasses a range of approaches and their definitions. These range from approaches and definitions which are either naturally distinct, or made so for marketing purposes, to approaches and definitions which overlap significantly, and which can be difficult to disentangle.

One such overlap pertains to spas. According to the International SPA Association (ISPA), hydrotherapy has long been a staple in European spas. It's the generic term for water therapies using jets, underwater massage and mineral baths and others. It also can mean a whirlpool bath, hot Roman pool, hot tub, Jacuzzi, cold plunge and mineral bath. These treatments use physical water properties, such as temperature and pressure, for therapeutic purposes, to stimulate blood circulation and treat the symptoms of certain diseases [19].

CHIROPRACTIC MEDICINE

Chiropractors specialize in adjustments manipulating the spine to put the body into better alignment. People typically visit the chiropractor when they have pain in their lower back, shoulders, and neck. But many chiropractors claim adjustments can also improve overall health.

The evidence: Chiropractic medicine does seem to provide some relief for lower back pain. But it may not be any better than other back pain treatments [20].

Studies have also found the technique effective for:

- Migraine and neck-related headaches
- Neck pain
- Joint conditions
- Whiplash

But there isn't much data on the effectiveness of chiropractic medicine for some general medical conditions. For example, there's no solid evidence that it can treat asthma, high blood pressure, menstrual pain, or fibromyalgia.

ENERGY THERAPIES

Energy therapies use magnets and therapeutic touch to manipulate the body's energy fields and improve health.

Energy therapy is the gentle art of clearing cellular memory through the human energy field promoting health, balance and relaxation. Energy therapy is based on the concept of connection between the

physical, emotional, mental and spiritual realms of our lives found in many holistic healing methods. It uses focused healing energy to clear blocks that accumulate in the body hindering the natural flow of physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual energy. This healing focus promotes personal empowerment, self-healing and spiritual growth [20].

For many people, feelings of being overwhelmed, anxious, and tired become a way of life. Living this way can lead to health problems such as headache, digestive disorders, back and neck pain tension, and sleeplessness, among others. Additionally, situations such as conflict in relationships, both personal and professional, being unproductive and unhappy at work, can easily and consistently develop. These types of issues, which originate from physical, emotional, and mental stress often involve an unhealthy complex relationship between mind and body, are ideally suited for treatment with energy based bodywork and therapy.

Energy therapy acknowledges that negative life experiences create emotions such as anger, fear, stress, resentment, guilt and sadness and that these emotions become trapped in specific areas of the physical body. Trapped emotions, often called energy blocks, create physical, emotional and mental disharmony.

During an energy session, suppressed emotions are released without the client having to remember the actual stressful event that caused the energy block. It is a safe, gentle, supportive method that can be used to release negative patterns of the past and help to empower and bring balance to your life. It is an extremely effective healing modality that releases stress, feelings of being overwhelmed, and negative emotions.

- Releases tension and everyday stress that makes you feel tired, burned out, and overwhelmed.
- Creates a renewed sense of vitality.
- Supports healing on all levels physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual.
- Brings balance to your life, allowing you to enjoy a clear sense of purpose and direction.
- Leaves you with a deeply relaxed and calm state of being.

MAGNETIC FIELD THERAPY

Magnets are thought by some to have healing abilities. Centuries ago, people believed magnets could treat everything from gout to baldness. Today, they're worn inside bracelets, shoes, and other accessories [21].

The evidence: There's no conclusive evidence that magnets are effective pain relievers. A small study has shown that a magnet therapy called transcranial magnetic stimulation may aid recovery in certain stroke survivors. The results are preliminary. More study is needed to see if the therapy is effective. Repetitive TMS (rTMS) also is a nonexperimental, FDA -approved treatment for major depression.



Magnets are generally safe. But they can disrupt the function of pacemakers, defibrillators, and insulin pumps. That makes them potentially dangerous for anyone who uses these devices.

REIKI

The premise of Reiki is that it accesses the body's natural energy to speed healing. The practitioner hovers his or her hands over the patient's body. Or he or she places them lightly on the person's skin [22].

The evidence: There is something to be said for the healing touch when it comes to bringing about a state of calm. One study checked the effect of Reiki on people hospitalized with heart disease. It showed that Reiki was effective in bringing about an increase in:

- Happiness
- Relaxation
- Feeling of calm

Table 1. Meaning of colors

	Chakra	Chakra location	Alleged function	Associated system
Red	First	Base of the spine	Stimulation	Circulatory system
Orange	Second	Pelvis	Energy levels	Lungs
Yellow	Third	Solar plexus	Purification	Blood
Green	Fourth	Heart	N/A	Heart
Blue	Fifth	Throat	Soothing illness and pain	Throat
Indigo	Sixth	Forehead	N/A	Skin
Violet	Seventh	Top of the head	N/A	N/A

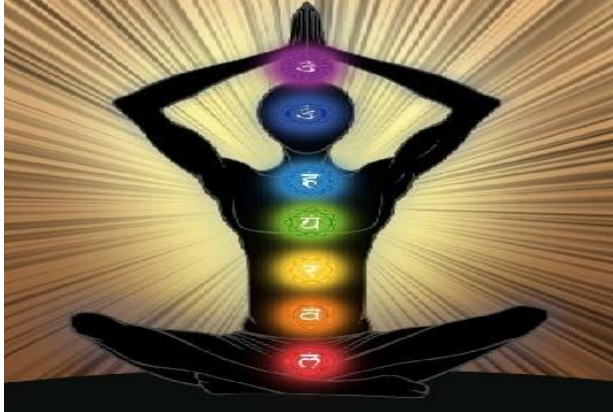


Fig 1. Ayurvedic medicine



Fig 2. Chinese Herbal medicines



Fig 3. Unani medicine



Fig 4. Homeopathy medicine



Fig 5. Samuel Hahnemann (founder of Homeopathy)

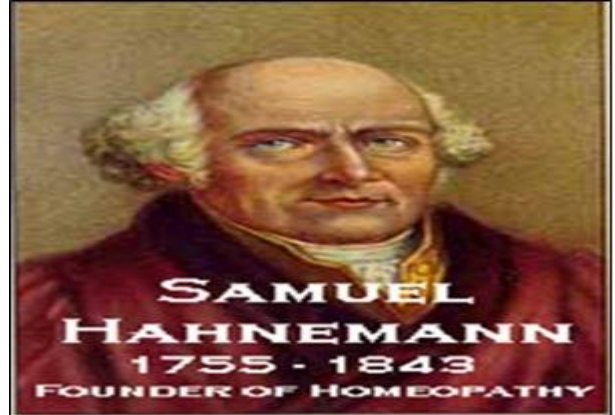


Fig 6. Acupressure therapy

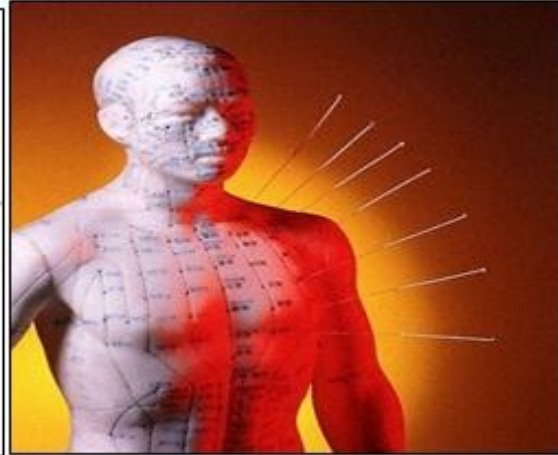


Fig 7. One of the founders of Naturopathic Medicine, Dr. Benedict Lust, summarized the philosophy of Naturopathy very succinctly in 1918



Fig 8. Soil / Mud Therapy



Fig 9. Aromatherapy (Pt 1:3, 500 BC – 199 AD)

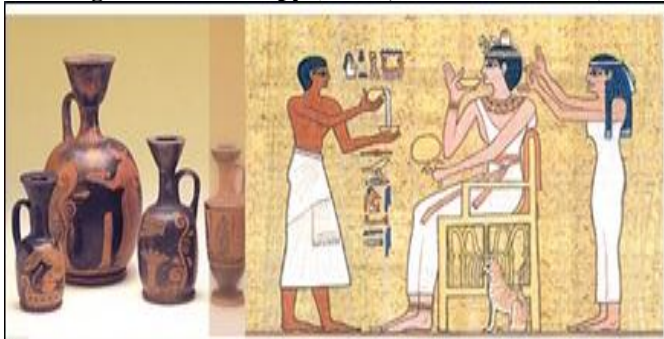


Fig 10. Dr. Edward Bach (Founder of Bach Flower Therapy)



Fig 11. Essences of Bach Flowers



Fig 12. Vincenz Priessnitz, (Initiator of the popular revival of hydrotherapy at Gräfenberg)



Fig 13. D.D.Palmer (Discoverer of Chiropractic Medicine)



Fig 14. Reiki treatment chart

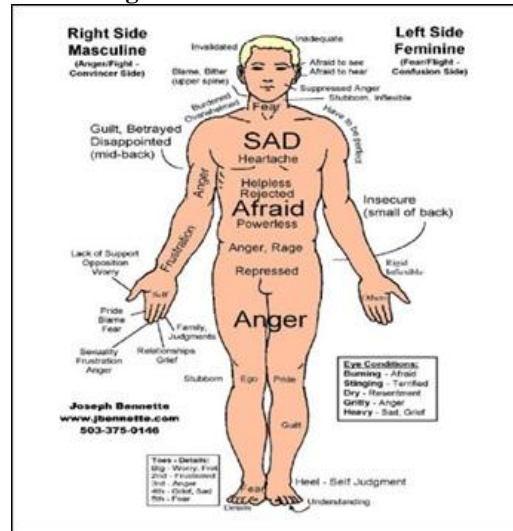
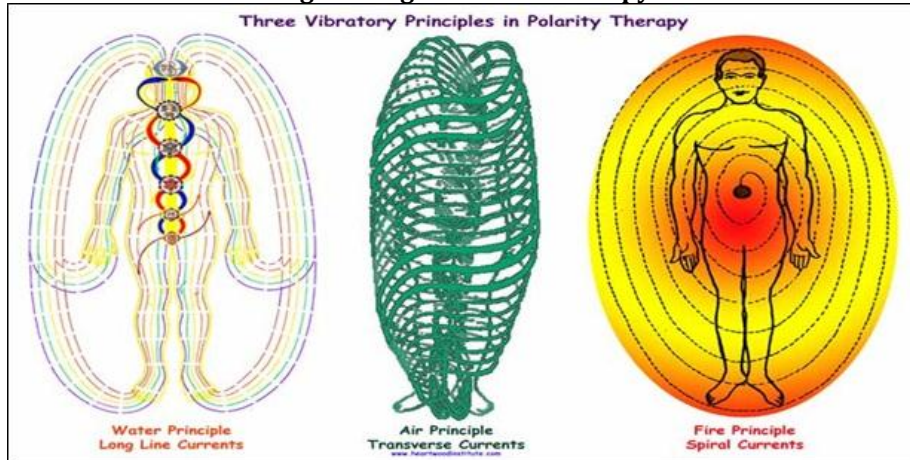


Fig 15. Magnetic Field Therapy



CONCLUSION

Alternative medicine has been used in various countries like India and China much before the development of present day medical science. These include practices which may be based on traditional medicine, folk knowledge, spiritual beliefs, newly conceived approaches to healing. The claims made by alternative medicine practitioners are generally not accepted by the medical community because evidence-

based assessment of safety and efficacy is either not available or has not been performed for many of these practices.

If scientific investigation establishes the safety and effectiveness of an alternative medical practice, it may be adopted by conventional practitioners. Now a day's many people find complementary and alternative medicine equally effective as the conventional medicine. In India various therapies like Ayurveda, meditation, yoga, have



been used since ancient period to heal the body. While meditation provides relief from mental stress, yoga helps to regain mental as well physical well being.

Perhaps it will help to provide optimum treatment of patients with diseases which the conventional medicine cannot cure. In Western world, due to the lack of knowledge about such alternative medicines, these are mostly criticized or perceived as superstition.

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None

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

