

## TECHNICAL INFORMATION

### **HOLISTIC NUTRITION AND MEDICINAL METHODOLOGIES**

#### **What is holistic nutrition and medicine?**

Holistic science is rooted in the philosophy of holism, which holds that there is deep order and complexity in nature. Nothing within a system can act in isolation and the body should be viewed as an organic whole, rather than a set of parts.

#### **Holism in practice**

Holistic practitioners in nutrition and medicine, generally eschew the use of modern chemical and pharmacological products on the ground that they are not compatible with the body's physiology and are overused. Whilst avoidance of these products is easily justified in nutrition, it is harder to do this in medicine, where intervention with pharmaceutical products is difficult to replace by other methods, for example in pain relief and anaesthesia.

A conventional medical practitioner will favour the use of modern pharmaceutical drugs, whereas, if there is a viable choice, an holistic practitioner will favour complementary and alternative treatments on the ground that they have less undesirable side effects. The prime consideration for both practitioners is patient welfare. Their motives are same but their approach may be different according to their training and convictions.

#### **What are complementary and alternative medicines (CAM)**

Complementary and alternative medicines are a group of diverse medical and health care systems, practices, and products that are not presently considered to be part of conventional medicine. While some of these, such as herbal medicine, are accepted by conventional medicine, others such as radionics, are not. What seems to be happening is that as modern science enables understanding of the subject they are then accepted by conventional medical practitioners.

The list of what is considered to be CAM changes continually, as those therapies that are seen to be safe and effective become adopted into conventional health care as new approaches to health care emerge.

#### **Are complementary medicine and alternative medicine different from each other?**

Yes, they are different.

Complementary medicine is used together with, not instead of conventional medicine. An example of a complementary therapy is using homoeopathy to help lessen a patient's discomfort following surgery.

Alternative medicine is used in place of conventional medicine. An example of an alternative therapy is using a special diet to treat cancer instead of undergoing surgery, radiation, or chemotherapy that has been recommended by a conventional doctor.

### **What are the major types of complementary and alternative medicine?**

CAM therapies can be divided into five categories, or domains:

#### **1. Alternative Medical Systems:**

Alternative medical systems are built upon complete systems of theory and practice. Often, these systems have evolved apart from and earlier than the conventional medical approach. Examples of alternative medical systems that have developed in Western cultures include homeopathic medicine and naturopathic medicine. Examples of systems that have developed in non-Western cultures include traditional Chinese medicine and Ayurveda.

#### **2. Mind-Body Interventions:**

Certain principles of mind-body intervention are relevant to veterinary medicine. Mind-body medicine uses a variety of techniques designed to enhance the mind's capacity to affect bodily function and symptoms. Some techniques that were considered CAM in the past have become mainstream (for example, in human medicine, patient support groups and cognitive-behavioral therapy). Other mind-body techniques in human medicine are still considered CAM, including meditation, prayer, mental healing, and therapies that use creative outlets such as art, music, or dance.

#### **3. Biologically Based Therapies:**

Biologically based therapies in CAM use substances found in nature, such as herbs, foods, and vitamins. Some examples include dietary supplements, herbal products, and the use of other so-called "natural" but as yet scientifically unproven therapies (for example, using shark cartilage to treat cancer).

#### **4. Manipulative and Body-Based Methods**

Manipulative and body-based methods in CAM are based on manipulation and/or movement of one or more parts of the body. Some examples include chiropractic or osteopathic manipulation, and massage.

#### **4. Energy Therapies:**

Energy therapies involve the use of energy fields. They are of two types: Biofield therapies are intended to affect energy fields that purportedly surround and penetrate the human body. The existence of such fields has not yet been scientifically proven. Some forms of energy therapy manipulate biofields by applying pressure and/or manipulating the body by placing the hands in, or through, these fields. Examples include qi gong, Reiki, and Therapeutic Touch. Bioelectromagnetic-based therapies involve the unconventional use of electromagnetic fields, such as pulsed fields, magnetic fields, or alternating current or direct current fields.

## **Dictionary of Terms**

**Aromatherapy** involves the use of essential oils (extracts or essences) from flowers, herbs, and trees to promote health and well-being.

**Ayurveda** is a CAM alternative medical system that has been practiced primarily in the Indian subcontinent for 5,000 years. Ayurveda includes diet and herbal remedies and emphasizes the use of body, mind, and spirit in disease prevention and treatment.

**Chiropractic** is a CAM alternative medical system. It focuses on the relationship between bodily structure (primarily that of the spine) and function, and how that relationship affects the preservation and restoration of health. Chiropractors use manipulative therapy as an integral treatment tool.

**Dietary supplements:** A dietary supplement is a product taken by mouth that contains a "dietary ingredient" intended to supplement the diet. Dietary ingredients may include vitamins, minerals, herbs or other botanicals, amino acids, and substances such as enzymes, organ tissues, and metabolites. Dietary supplements come in many forms, including extracts, concentrates, tablets, capsules, gels, liquids, and powders.

**Electromagnetic fields :** Electromagnetic fields (EMFs, also called electric and magnetic fields) are invisible lines of force that surround all electrical devices. The Earth also produces EMFs; electric fields are produced when there is thunderstorm activity, and magnetic fields are believed to be produced by electric currents flowing at the Earth's core.

**Homeopathic medicine** is a CAM alternative medical system. In homeopathic medicine, there is a belief that "like cures like" meaning that small, highly diluted quantities of medicinal substances are given to cure symptoms, when the same substances given at higher or more concentrated doses would actually cause those symptoms.

**Massage** therapists manipulate muscle and connective tissue to enhance function of those tissues and promote relaxation and well-being.

**Naturopathic medicine** is a CAM alternative medical system in which practitioners work with natural healing forces within the body, with a goal of helping the body heal from disease and attain better health. Practices may include dietary modifications, massage, exercise and acupuncture.

**Osteopathic medicine** is a form of conventional medicine that, in part, emphasizes diseases arising in the musculoskeletal system. There is an underlying belief that all of the body's systems work together, and disturbances in one system may affect function elsewhere in the body. Some osteopathic physicians practice osteopathic manipulation, a full-body system of hands-on techniques to alleviate pain, restore function, and promote health and well-being.

**Qi gong** is a component of traditional Chinese medicine that combines movement, meditation, and regulation of breathing to enhance the flow of qi (an ancient term given to what is believed to be vital energy) in the body, improve blood circulation, and enhance immune function.

**Reiki** is a Japanese word representing Universal Life Energy. Reiki is based on the belief that when spiritual energy is channelled through a Reiki practitioner, the patient's spirit is healed, which in turn heals the physical body.

**Therapeutic Touch** is derived from an ancient technique called laying-on of hands. It is based on the premise that it is the healing force of the therapist that affects the patient's recovery; healing is promoted when the body's energies are in balance; and, by passing their hands over the patient, healers can identify energy imbalances.

*This article produced with acknowledgements to the National Institutes of Health (NIH)*

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