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## HOLISTIC MEDICINE: STEPPING STONES OF NEW LIFE IN MODERN MEDICINE

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### ABSTRACT

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Holistic living is an art of living in harmony with nature and deals with a concern for the whole universe. The term holistic medicine is derived from the term "Holism" which means that a living being is not to be viewed as a composite of different organs but as an integrated entity viewed as a whole. The holistic concept takes into account individual's physical, spiritual, nutritional and even social background. Holistic medicine is an intelligent combination best utilizing both streams i.e. while mainstream medicine is well suited for crisis intervention and alternative medicine is for health maintenance. Alternative medicine denotes a system of health care where combinations of healthcare systems are used instead of conventional or mainstream medicine to treat diseases. Alternative medical practices are based on a belief system and are not derived from modern science. But holistic medicine neither rejects conventional medicines nor comprises alternative practices. It is high time to recognize the emerging awareness, need and practice of Holistic and Integrated medicine. Drawing from various systems of healing from across the globe holistic medicine has widened the scope of treatment making it effective, safe and affordable.

**INTRODUCTION:** Holistic healing means taking a holistic approach when seeking treatment for imbalances and choosing to live a more balanced lifestyle. What primarily distinguishes holistic healing apart from alternative medicine, complementary medicine and integrative medicine is the fact that physical health is not necessarily the main focus. Complementary and alternative medicine<sup>1</sup> (CAM) includes a variety of healing approaches and therapies taken from around the world that historically have not been included in conventional Western medicine. Many aspects of CAM are rooted in ancient, indigenous systems of healing, such as those of China, India, Tibet, Africa and America. Many of these treatments and health care practices are popular, and nowadays even some of them are being used in the hospitals (for example, acupuncture and some chiropractic treatments). Because of increased interest and use of CAM, more and more medical schools are including information about CAM treatments, such as acupuncture, herbal medicine, chiropractic treatments, and homeopathy.

**Complementary medicine:** CAM practices are used in conjunction with conventional medicine. Although the distinction between conventional medicine and alternative medicine is not easy to determine, a basic philosophical difference exists. Conventional medicine generally defines health as the absence of disease or dysfunction. The main causes of disease and dysfunction usually are considered to be isolated factors, such as pathogens, biochemical imbalances, and aging, and treatment often involves drugs or surgery. In contrast, alternative medicine practices often define health holistically, that is, as a balance of systems- physical, emotional and spiritual- involving the whole person. Disharmony among these systems is thought to cause illness. Treatment in this case involves strengthening the body's own defence. In this communication, we want to throw some light about the general aspects and the therapeutic

benefits of holistic approach<sup>2</sup> which is an emerging trend in modern medicine.

Various CAM Therapies Included in the 2007 NHIS;

- Acupuncture
- Ayurveda
- Biofeed back
- Chelation therapy
- Chiropractic or osteopathic manipulation
- Deep breathing exercises
- Diet-based therapies;
  - Atkins diet
  - Macrobiotic diet
  - Ornish diet
  - Pritikin diet
  - South Beach diet
  - Vegetarian diet
  - Zone diet
- Energy healing therapy/Reiki
- Guided imagery
- Homeopathic treatment
- Hypnosis
- Massage
- Meditation
- Movement therapies;
  - Alexander technique
  - Feldenkreis
  - Pilates
  - Trager psychophysical integration
- Natural products (nonvitamin and nonmineral, such as herbs and other products from plants, enzymes, etc.)
- Naturopathy
- Progressive relaxation
- Qi gong
- Tai chi
- Traditional healers
  - Botanica
  - Curandero
  - Espiritista
  - Hierbero or Yerbera

- Native American healer/Medicine man
- Shaman
- Sobador

**Acupuncture:** Acupuncture is one of the oldest healing practices in the world; a part of traditional Chinese medicine. It is based on the concept that disease results from disruption in the flow of Qi and imbalance in the forces of Yin and Yang. Practices such as herbs, meditation, massage, and acupuncture seek to aid healing by restoring the yin-yang balance and the flow of qi (energy). Acupuncture<sup>3</sup> is the stimulation of specific points on the body by a variety of techniques, including the insertion of thin metal needles through the skin.

It is intended to remove blockages in the flow of qi and through the stimulation of specific points on the body helps to restore and maintain health. In the United States, where practitioners incorporate healing traditions from China, Japan, Korea, and other countries, acupuncture is considered part of complementary and alternative medicine. Relatively few complications have been reported from the use of acupuncture. However, acupuncture can cause potentially serious side effects if not delivered properly by a qualified practitioner.

**Ayurveda:** An Ancient medicinal form, developed during the Vedic times, about 5000 years ago. The word 'Ayur' means life. Ayurveda also proposes treatments for specific health problems, whether they are physical or mental. The chief aim of Ayurvedic practices<sup>4</sup> is to cleanse the body of substances that can cause disease, and this is believed to help reestablish harmony and balance. Ayur means life while 'Veda' means science. Therefore, Ayurveda literally means the 'Science of Life'. It is not just a medicinal system, but also a way of life. The medicinal form is governed by the laws of nature, which suggest that life is a combination

of senses, mind, body and soul. According to the Science of Life, the structural aspect of every individual comprises of five elements - earth, water, fire, air and space.

The Ayurvedic medicine generally helps to cure a particular disease; the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being is taken into consideration. The best part of acquiring an Ayurvedic treatment is that the prescribed doses of medicine are taken in the form of powders, tablets, decoctions, and medicated oils that are prepared from natural herbs, plants and minerals. Traditional techniques and processes are used to prepare the medicines at home, while certain amount of mechanization is inevitably used for large-scale production. The beauty of the therapeutics is that they contain the active principles in their natural forms and their administration in prescribed doses does not cause any side effects to the patients.

Ayurveda gives a complete look into the lifestyle of a person, like starting from his/her personality to the daily food habits. The Science of Life helps us in understanding each individual at a very subtle personal level and giving a detailed description about the diet, daily routine, lifestyle, actions and activities to be followed. The science teaches how to live life in a balanced way. Ayurveda aims at having a healthy and happy society, free from diseases. India has gained worldwide recognition for its indigenous and extensive Ayurvedic treatment. Various centers are established throughout the length and breadth of the country, wherein authentic Ayurvedic treatment is given. Kerala is the hub of Ayurvedic treatments in India. Ayurvedic treatment's soothing effect on the body and soul has attracted tourists from different parts of the country as well as from across the globe.

**Biofeedback:** Biofeedback<sup>5</sup> uses simple electronic devices to teach clients how to consciously regulate bodily functions, such as

breathing, heart rate, and blood pressure, in order to improve overall health. Biofeedback is used to reduce stress, eliminate headaches, recondition injured muscles, control asthmatic attacks, and relieve pain.

**Chelation Therapy:** Chelation therapy<sup>6</sup> is a chemical process in which a substance is used to bind molecules, such as metals or minerals, and hold them tightly so that they can be removed from a system, such as the body. In medicine, chelation has been scientifically proven to rid the body of excess or toxic metals. For example, a person who has lead poisoning may be given chelation therapy in order to bind and remove excess lead from the body before it can cause damage

**Chiropractic Care:** It is a health care discipline and profession that emphasizes diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mechanical disorders of the musculoskeletal system, especially the spine, under the hypothesis that these disorders affect general health via the nervous system. This care involves the adjustment of the spine and joints to influence the body's nervous system and natural defense mechanisms to alleviate pain and improve general health. It is primarily used to treat back problems, headaches, nerve inflammation, muscle spasms, and other injuries and traumas.

It is generally categorized as complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), a characterization that many chiropractors reject. The main chiropractic treatment technique involves manual therapy, including manipulation of the spine, other joints, and soft tissues; treatment also includes exercises, health and lifestyle counseling. Traditional chiropractic assumes that a vertebral subluxation or spinal joint dysfunction interferes with the body's function.

D. D. Palmer founded chiropractic in the 1890s and his son B.J. Palmer helped to expand it in the early 20th century. It has two main groups: 'straights', now the minority, emphasize

vitalism, Innate Intelligence and spinal adjustments, and consider subluxations to be the leading cause of all disease; "mixers" are more open to mainstream and alternative medical techniques such as exercise, massage, nutritional supplements, and acupuncture. Chiropractic<sup>7</sup> is well established in the U.S., Canada and Australia.

**Deep Breathing:** Deep breathing<sup>8</sup> involves slow and deep inhalation through the nose, usually to a count of 10, followed by slow and complete exhalation for a similar count. The process may be repeated 5 to 10 times, several times a day.

**Diet Based Therapies:** A variety of alternative diets<sup>9</sup> are offered for treating cancer, cardiovascular disease, and food allergies. Virtually all these interventions focus on eating fresher and freshly prepared vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and legumes. Allergy to food has become a major area of research. Food intolerance is being studied as a causal or contributing factor in rheumatoid arthritis, and there is evidence that food-elimination diets may help many hyperactive children. Some alternate dietary lifestyles are believed to offer a greater resistance to illness.

These include several variations of the vegetarian diet, such as those consumed by Seventh-Day Adventists and proponents of the macrobiotic diet. Studies have found a significant lowering of risk factors for heart disease and certain forms of cancer in these two groups. Recent studies have also reported that certain cultural eating styles, such as the Asian and Mediterranean diets, appear to lower risk factors for heart disease and certain forms of cancer as well. Eskimo diet is another one which has fascinated researchers. In spite of the high fat food they eat, they are found to be very healthy. The latest theory is that it is because of the marine fat rich in Omega-3 that they eat which offer them such protection. Buttermilk and yogurt were used to treat thrush (oral candidiasis), a fungus infection of the mouth,

before the invention of fungicides. Fresh limes were used to treat scurvy in sailors; cod liver oil was used to treat rickets in children, before the "invention" of vitamins. Many generations of people sipped warm milk before bed time to aid in the sleep. Now we know that milk contains an amino acid that causes the brain to release a mildly tranquilizing substance that encourages drowsiness.

Food can be therapeutic in several ways. It provides nutrient that is needed by a sick person in a form he or she can use. It also provides nutrients for persons who are deficient in them. Sometimes food also supplies an agent or chemical that aids in the metabolism of other nutrients. Food such as buttermilk can help stabilize the fungus/bacteria balance in the mouth. Such foods act by changing the ecology within the human body. Many of the old time remedies stress food avoidance as well as specifying what to eat. For example, the ancient Indian practice of Ayurveda is mainly based on diet control.

As you can learn by referring to the section on Ayurveda in Holistic Online, foods are classified as either helping or hurting the three doshas, the governing principles under which all living being are classified in Ayurveda. Food is used to stabilize the "doshas" along with other things such as meditation, yoga etc. Many people are allergic to some foods such as chocolate, lactose etc. Similarly some people get constipation from excessive high intake of fiber. Diabetes patients, especially Type 2 diabetes, need to watch out what they eat especially food containing sugar. People with heart disease need to control the intake of foods containing high amount of fat and cholesterol. These are all common sense diet therapies. Macrobiotic diet- A macrobiotic diet is low in fat, emphasizes whole grains and vegetables, and restricts the intake of fluids. Of particular importance is the consumption of fresh, non-processed foods.

**Energy Medicine:** Energy medicine<sup>10</sup> is a domain in CAM that deals with energy fields of two types:

Veritable, which can be measured and;

Putative, which have yet to be measured.

The veritable energies employ mechanical vibrations (such as sound) and electromagnetic forces, including visible light, magnetism, monochromatic radiation (such as laser beams), and rays from other parts of the electromagnetic spectrum. They involve the use of specific, measurable wavelengths and frequencies to treat patients. Therapies involving putative energy fields are based on the concept that human beings are infused with a subtle form of energy. This vital energy or life force is known under different names in different cultures, such as Qi in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), Ki in the Japanese Kampo system, doshas in Ayurvedic medicine, and elsewhere as prana, etheric energy, fohat, orgone, odic force, mana, and homeopathic resonance.

Vital energy is believed to flow throughout the material human body, but it has not been measured by means of conventional instrumentation. Practitioners of energy medicine believe that illness results from disturbances of these subtle energies (the biofield). For example, more than 2,000 years ago, Asian practitioners postulated that the flow and balance of life energies are necessary for maintaining health and described tools to restore them. Herbal medicine, acupuncture, acupressure, moxibustion, and cupping, for example, are all believed to act by correcting imbalances in the internal biofield, such as by restoring the flow of Qi through meridians to reinstate health. Some therapists are believed to emit or transmit the vital energy (external Qi) to a recipient to restore health. Examples of practices involving putative energy fields include:

Reiki and Johrei, both of Japanese origin and, Qi gong, a Chinese practice.

In the aggregate, these approaches are among the most controversial of CAM practices because neither the external energy fields nor their therapeutic effects have been demonstrated convincingly by any biophysical means. Yet, energy medicine is gaining popularity in the American marketplace and has become a subject of investigations at some academic medical centers.

**Reiki:** Reiki<sup>11</sup> is a healing practice that originated in Japan. Reiki practitioners place their hands lightly on or just above the person receiving treatment, with the goal of facilitating the person's own healing response. In the United States, Reiki is part of complementary and alternative medicine. People use Reiki to promote overall health and well-being. Reiki is also used by people who are seeking relief from disease-related symptoms and the side effects of conventional medical treatments. Reiki<sup>12</sup> has historically been practiced as a form of self-care. Increasingly, it is also provided by health care professionals in a variety of clinical settings. Scientific research is under way to learn more about how Reiki may work, its possible effects on health, and diseases and conditions for which it may be helpful.

**Hypnosis:** Hypnosis<sup>13</sup> is an altered state of consciousness characterized by increased responsiveness to suggestion. The hypnotic state is attained by first relaxing the body, then shifting attention toward a narrow range of objects or ideas as suggested by the hypnotist or hypnotherapist. The procedure is used to effect positive changes and to treat numerous health conditions including ulcers, chronic pain, respiratory ailments, stress, and headaches

**Massage:** Massage<sup>14</sup> helps to enhance the function of certain tissues (esp. muscle and connective tissue) and promote relaxation and human well-being.

**Meditation:** Meditation is a group of techniques, which started in Eastern religious or spiritual traditions, where a person learns to focus his attention and suspend the stream of thoughts that normally occupy the human mind. 'Yoga is an ancient practice that helps us to create a sense of union between the body, mind, and spirit'. The exercises of Yoga are designed in such a manner so as to put pressure on the glandular Systems of the body, thus increasing its efficiency and thus, total health. It energizes the inner cells, strengthens the spinal cord and activates the nervous system. It allows us to use the body as an instrument for eternal awareness, so that we can receive wisdom and knowledge.

Man, who is in constant search of joy and happiness, keeps running away from his Self, which is the real source of joy. A human being normally seeks joy in money or possessions, in power or human love and ultimately in religion, which is also outside his self. The inner self, which is our awareness, is energy, called the energy of Divine Love. All the manifestation of material energy is guided by the supreme energy of Divine Love. The silent working of awareness is automatic, minute, dynamic and precious. After Self-realization, this divine energy appears to us as a silent throbbing vibration flowing through our being. But we have been unable to achieve Self-realization because we cannot fix our attention on something that lacks form (abstract being). Yoga has been proven to be helpful in the prevention & cure of various diseases which includes

Asthma, Arthritis, Back- Pain, Constipation, Diabetes, Drug-Addiction, Headache, Heart- Diseases, Hernia, Hyperacidity, Hypertension ,Hyperthyroidism ,Insomnia ,Memory loss, Migraine, Pile-Hemorrhoids, Slipped-Disc, Sexual-Disorder, Sinusitis, Spondylitis, Stress, Tonsillitis, Varicose-Veins; in menstrual disorders to alleviate menstrual pain, ensure an easier delivery, manage stress,

menopause, eliminate excess fat making muscles more flexible and stronger, etc.

**Naturopathy:** The word naturopathy<sup>15</sup> comes from Greek and Latin words and literally stands for 'nature disease'.

- A central belief in naturopathy is that nature has a healing power (a principle called *Vis medicatrix naturae*).
- Another belief is that living organisms (including the human body) have the power to maintain a state of balance and health, and to heal themselves.

Practitioners of naturopathy prefer to use treatment approaches that they consider to be the most natural and least invasive, instead of using drugs and more invasive procedures. Naturopathy was named and popularized in the United States by Benedict Lust, born in Germany in the late 1800s. When Lust became seriously ill with tuberculosis, he was treated by a priest and healer in Germany named Sebastian Kneipp. Kneipp's treatment was based on various healing approaches and philosophies that were popular in Europe, including:

- Hydrotherapy (water treatments)
- The "nature cure" movement, which focused on restoring health through a return to nature. This movement advocated therapies such as gentle exercise, herbal medications, wholesome dietary approaches and exposure to sun and air.

Naturopathy is also called naturopathic medicine; a whole medical system that originated in Europe. Naturopathy aims to support the body's ability to heal itself through the use of dietary and lifestyle changes together with CAM therapies such as herbs, massage, and joint manipulation. Its emphasis is on supporting health rather than combating the disease. People seek naturopathic care for various health-related purposes, including primary care,

support of wellness, and treatment of diseases and conditions (often chronic ones). Naturopathy focuses upon treatments considered "natural," but it is not without risk.

**Hydrotherapy:** Hydrotherapy<sup>16</sup> is the use of water in the treatment of disease. Hydrothermal therapy uses its temperature effects, as in hot baths, saunas, wraps, etc. Hydro and hydrothermal therapies are traditional methods of treatment that have been used for the treatment of disease and injury, by many cultures, including those of ancient Rome, China, and Japan. The ancient Greeks took therapeutic baths. Water is an important ingredient in the traditional Chinese and Native American healing systems. A Bavarian monk, Father Sebastian Kneipp helped to re-popularize the therapeutic use of water in the 19th century. The recuperative properties of hydrotherapy are based on its mechanical and/or thermal effects.

It exploits the body's reaction to hot and cold stimuli, to the protracted application of heat, to the pressure exerted by the water and to the sensation it gives to our body. The nerves carry impulses felt at the skin deeper into the body, where they are stimulate the immune system, influencing the production of stress hormones, invigorating the circulation and digestion, encouraging blood flow and lessening pain sensitivity. Generally, heat calms and soothes the body, slowing down the activity of internal organs. Cold, in contrast, stimulates and invigorates, increasing internal activity. If you are experiencing tense muscles and anxiety from your stress, a hot shower or bath would be quite refreshing. If you are feeling tired and stressed out, you might want to try taking a warm shower or bath followed by a short, invigorating cold shower to help stimulate your body and mind. When you submerge yourself in a bath, a pool, or a whirlpool, you experience a kind of weightlessness. Your body is relieved from the constant pull of gravity. Water also has a hydrostatic effect. It has a massage-like feeling as the water gently kneads your body. Water, in

motion, stimulates touch receptors on the skin, boosting blood circulation and releasing tight muscles.

Hydrotherapy and hydrothermal therapy are chiefly used to tone up the body, to stimulate digestion, the circulation, and the immune system, and to bring relief from pain. Water has special powers in getting rid of stress and rejuvenating our body. It affects the skin and muscles. It calms the lungs, heart, stomach, and endocrine system by stimulating nerve reflexes on the spinal cord.

**Homeopathy:** Homeopathy<sup>17</sup> is a system of medical practice based on the theory that any substance that can produce symptoms of disease or illness in a healthy person can cure those symptoms in a sick person. For example, someone suffering from insomnia can be given a dose of coffee. Administered in diluted form, homeopathic remedies are derived from many natural sources—including plants, metals, and minerals. Homeopathy, also known as homeopathic medicine, is a whole medical system that originated in Europe. Homeopathy seeks to stimulate the body's ability to heal itself by giving very small doses of highly diluted substances that in larger doses would produce illness or symptoms (an approach called 'like cures like'). Homeopathy is used for overall wellbeing and to treat many diseases.

Disadvantages:

- Not an effective treatment for any specific condition
- Its key concepts are not consistent with the current understanding of science (particularly chemistry and physics.)
- There is limited research on the safety of homeopathic treatments.

**Aromatherapy:** Aromatherapy means 'treatment using scents'. It is a holistic treatment which involves caring for the body with pleasant smelling botanical oils such as rose, lemon, lavender and peppermint. The

essential oils are added to the bath or massaged onto the skin, inhaled directly or diffused to scent an entire room. Aromatherapy<sup>18</sup> is used for the relief of pain, care for the skin, alleviate tension and fatigue and invigorate the entire body. Essential oils can affect the mood, alleviate fatigue, reduce anxiety and help in relaxation. When inhaled, they work on the brain and nervous system through stimulation of the olfactory nerves.

Essential oils<sup>19</sup> are aromatic essences extracted from plants, flowers, trees, fruits, bark, grasses and seeds with distinctive therapeutic, psychological, and physiological properties, which improves and prevents illness. There are about 150 essential oils. Most of these oils have antiseptic properties, antiviral, anti-inflammatory, pain-relieving, antidepressant and expectorant. Other properties of the essential oils which are taken advantage of in aromatherapy are their stimulation, relaxation, digestion improvement, and diuretic properties. To get the maximum benefit from essential oils, it should be made from natural raw materials. Synthetically made oils are not effective.

Aromatherapy is one of the fastest growing fields in alternative medicine. It is widely used at home, clinics and hospitals for a variety of applications such as pain relief for women in labor pain, relieving pain caused by the side effects of the chemotherapy undergone by the cancer patients and rehabilitation of cardiac patients. Aromatherapy has already started getting into the mainstream. In Japan, engineers are incorporating aroma systems into new buildings. In one such application, the scent of lavender and rosemary is sprayed into the customer area to calm down the waiting customers, while the perfumes from lemon and eucalyptus are used in the bank teller counters to keep the staff alert.

**Herbal Therapy:** Herbal therapy is a broad term used to refer to any type of healthcare treatment done using fresh or dried herbs. The



use of herbs may take the form of supplements, fusions or teas, tinctures, topical creams and poultices. Herb therapy<sup>20</sup> may also include the creation of a healing steam that is scented with various combinations. The origins of herbal therapy still remains a mystery But every culture has used herbs as a means of dealing with different physical and emotional illnesses. Perhaps the most ancient documented form of this type of therapy is found in the healing traditions of China. Grounded in Taoist beliefs and principles, Chinese herbal therapy incorporates the use of many different types of herbs in treating the sick. In some cases, a single herb is used in the therapeutic treatment and in some cases several herbs are combined in order to prepare medicine for a specific ailment.

One of the advantages of herbal therapies in general is that the use of herbs helps to provide the body with essential nutrients that may be lacking in the daily diet. Usually when the body does not receive sufficient nutrition, various types of aches, pains, and emotional disorders begin to appear. By using herbs to restore a nutritional balance, the body is equipped with what it needs to overcome illness and restore health. Natural herbal therapy can take many forms. Teas and tinctures are among the most common approaches. Both are efficient ways to quickly introduce nutrients into the body, and may provide quick relief. One noted example is the claim made for a simple tea made with cayenne powder and hot water which is said to ease both the pain and the damage that can be the result of a heart attack within a matter of few minutes. Dried herbs are also a common tool in the practice of herbal therapy.

Leaves, stems and sometimes roots are dried and ground into fine powders that can then be ingested as capsules or used topically to prepare poultices to place on the skin. Likewise, skin rashes, muscle aches and joint pain may begin to subside after applying a poultice that contains herbs known to soothe the skin or to ease

swelling and inflammation. Herbal aromatherapy is a specialized type of herbal therapy that utilizes herbs to restore the balance between the body and the mind. The process involves simmering fresh or dried herbs in water to release the scent. For example, simmering lavender helps to calm the nerves after a tiring day and may also be effective in easing the after effects of an anxiety.

**Traditional Medicine:** Curanderos- In Latin America, Curanderos specialize in treating illness through the use of supernatural forces, herbal remedies and other natural medicines. (A Curandero is a type of traditional folk healer).

**Energy healing therapy:** It involves the channeling of healing energy through the hands of a practitioner into the client's body to restore a normal energy balance and, thus, health. It has been used to treat a wide variety of health problems, and is often used in conjunction with other alternative and conventional medical treatments<sup>21</sup>.

**Espiritista:** An Espiritista is a traditional healer who assesses a patient's condition and recommends herbs or religious amulets so as to improve physical or mental health or to help overcome an individual personal problem.

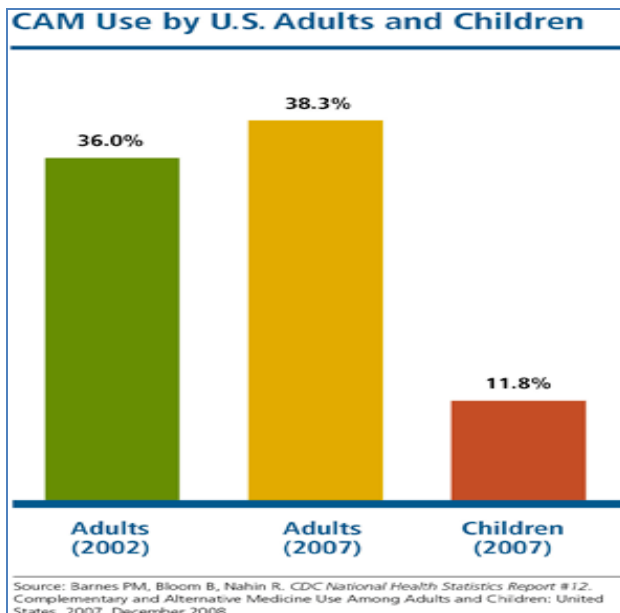
**Feldenkreis:** Feldenkrais is a movement therapy which utilizes a method of education in physical coordination and movement. Practitioners use verbal guidance and light touch to teach the method through one-on-one lessons and group classes. Their main aim is to help the person become more aware of how ones body moves through space and to improve physical functioning.

**Guided imagery:** It involves a series of relaxation techniques followed by the visualization of detailed images, which are usually calm and peaceful in nature. During treatment, the individual will visualize their body free of the specific problem or condition. Sessions are,

typically 20–30 minutes in length, and are practiced several times a week.

**Hierbero:** A Hierbero or Yerbera is a traditional healer or practitioner with knowledge of the medicinal qualities of plants.

#### Statistical Data of Cam Users:



**FIGURE 1: CAM USE BY U.S. ADULTS AND CHILDREN**

Figure 1 depicts that the various alternative practices among people gets popularized. If we analyze the modern super multi specialized hospitals, we can observe the practice of holistic medicine which indicates the growing interest of alternative practices among the public.

**Who uses CAM most:** People of all backgrounds use CAM<sup>22</sup>. However, CAM use among adults is greater among women and those with higher levels of education and higher incomes.

**CAM Therapies used the most:** Non-vitamin and non-mineral natural products are the most commonly used CAM therapy among adults. Use has increased for several therapies, including deep breathing exercises, meditation, yoga, massage, Pressing, rubbing, and moving muscles and other soft tissues of the body, primarily by

using the hands and fingers. The aim is to increase the flow of blood and oxygen to the massaged area.

**CONCLUSION:** Holistic medicine is a combination of conventional and alternative therapy. Holistic living is an art of living in harmony with nature and deals with a concern for the whole universe. Thus it takes into account an individual's physical, spiritual, nutritional and even social background and helps to treat him in a unique manner which is not only efficient but also quite effective. In fact, the holistic approach is the need of the hour and people have started recognizing its benefits and have started turning their attention towards this approach which has started coming to the lime light. It would not be long before CAM emerges as an equivalent to any of the treatment forms in practice today.

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