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RESEARCH ARTICLE

HERBAL MEDICINE CAN DO WONDERS IN PSYCHIATRY

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ABSTRACT

Connection between mind and body and influence of each on the other, is well recognized by all clinicians and particularly by psychiatrist. Traditional medicine as it is currently practiced in the United States is based solely on scientific methodology. The term alternative medicine has come to be recognized as practices that differ from the usual traditional practices in the treatment of diseases.

**Key words:**

Domains, Herbal medicines,

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INTRODUCTION

**Alternative Medicine**

**Definition**

Interventions that differ from the traditional or conventional biomedical treatment of disease. Alternative refers to an intervention that is used instead of conventional treatment.

**Historical Perspective**

In 1991, an office of alternative medicine was established by the National Institute of Health to study nonconventional therapies and to evaluate their usefulness and effectiveness. Since that time things has changed to the National Centre for Complementary and Alternative medicine.

**Types or Domains**

Domains of alternative medicine used in psychiatric nursing include,

Alternative medical system

- Acupuncture
- Ayurveda
- Homeopathy
- Naturopathy

Mind-body intervention

- Meditation
- Hypnosis
- Imagery

- Biofeedback
- Music, art therapy

Biological based therapies

- Herbal therapy
- Aroma therapy
- Special diet therapy

Manipulative and body based methods

- Yoga
- Massage

Energy therapy

- Therapeutic touch
- Light therapy
- Reflexology

**Reasons Why People Seek Cam Therapies**

- Wanting greater control over their lives.
- Wanting a more holistic orientation in health care.
- Concern over the side effects of conventional therapies.
- Finding the results of conventional treatments to be inadequate.
- Dissatisfaction with conventional health care.
- Media contributing in consumer's awareness of alternative therapies.
- Growing evidence of effectiveness of alternative therapies.

### Principles

In 1991, Eliopoulos identified five basic principles underlying CAM:

- The body has the ability to heal itself.
- Health and healing are related to a harmony of body, mind and spirit.
- Basic good health practices build the foundation for healing.
- Healing practices are individualized.
- People are responsible for their own healing.

### Herbal Medicine

Herbal remedies are the back bone of traditional Chinese therapy. The herbal formulary consists of more than 3000 herbs as well as animal and mineral substances. A typical herbal preparation contain a dozen or so herbs, roots, powders or animal substances and may be prepared for administration in a number of ways.

### Indication

- Alcohol abuse
- Alzheimer's disease
- Depression
- Stress
- Insomnia

### Guidelines

Guinness (1993) offers the following points for practitioners and individuals contemplating the use of herbal medicine.

#### Be careful of resources

Because of the lack of government scrutiny, the purity and potency of the herbal medicines cannot be guaranteed. The buyer must be careful to select reputable brands.

#### Choose the most reliable forms

Tinctures and freeze dried products have been prepared to retard spoilage and prevent loss of potency.

#### More is not better

Never take more than recommended dosages at the suggested intervals. Adverse effects can occur from overdosing with herbal medicines just as they do with prescription pharmaceuticals.

#### Monitor physical reactions

Discontinue the herbal medication at the first sign of allergic or other adverse reactions. Discontinue using it after a reasonable length of time if there seems to be no significant indication that is producing the desired effect

### Take no risks

Do not self medicate with herbal remedies for serious illness or injuries. Do not take herbal medication without a physician's approval if you are pregnant or breast feeding, very young or very old or taking other medications.

### Common Herbal Remedies in Psychiatry

Common names	Mechanical uses/ possible actions
Black Cohoes	May provide relief of menstrual cramps, improving mood, calming effect
Chamomile	As a tea, is effective as a mild sedative in the relief of insomnia.
Echinacea	Stimulate immune system
Fennel	Stimulate appetites of anorexics
Ginkgo	Used to treat short term memory loss
Hops	Used in case of nervousness, mild anxiety and insomnia
Kava kava	Used to reduce anxiety while promoting mental activity
Passion flowers	Used to treat nervousness and insomnia. Depress the CNS to produce sedative effect.
Peppermint	Used as mild sedative
Skull cap	Used as sedative for mild anxiety and nervousness.
St john's wart	Used in mild to moderate depression.
Valerian	Used to treat insomnia

### CONCLUSION

Psychiatric illness is marked by progressive, chronic deterioration of intellectual, judgement, memory or emotional stability; they lack the sense of well-being. Herbal medicines have good scope in psychiatry it can be applicable to all those who have poor state of well being. Thus alternative medicines can be useful for mental health nurses to improve the quality of care

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