

Patients' motivations for and use of CAM

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How many people use CAM?

- A simple question – but difficult to answer!
- Survey data are unreliable....

How many people use CAM?

- Survey data show usage between 3%



How many people use CAM?

- ... and 83%



The problem of definitions...

- What is CAM?
 - What is not CAM?
 - Is 'a cup of herbal tea' CAM?
 - Is acupuncture CAM when provided by my MD?
- Do I use CAM if I eat 'natural' vitamins?
 - Or if I give myself the treat of a monthly massage?





Across Europe we find a multitude of local definitions, categories, regulations, etc.

- **This diversity makes it difficult to establish a clear picture of and compare the use of CAM across Europe**
- **A comparison of the situation in Denmark and Italy can illustrate the diversity....**

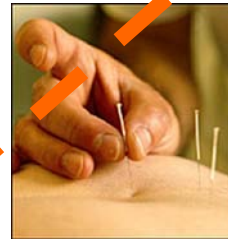
Diversity in definitions and regulations...

- In Denmark:
 - Treatments can legally be provided by non-authorized persons outside the public health care system
 - Such treatments are called 'Alternative treatment'
- In Italy (Tuscany):
 - Only doctors have the legal right to give curative treatments to sick persons
 - If the treatment does not have official recognition, it is called 'non-conventional medicine';
 - If it is recognized officially, it is called 'complementary medicine'

Some notes on healthcare in Denmark



apotek



Some notes on healthcare in Tuscany



Two different worlds...

- To navigate in...
- To "be a person" in....
- To interpret and experience the body in...
- To act in...

Motivations for CAM use in Europe

- Varies according to the local situation of CAM, but.... some general patterns can be found:
 - **To treat chronic diseases (pain, asthma, allergies) – maybe not to cure, but to keep symptoms low**
 - **To treat (repetitive) minor diseases (colds, infections, etc)**
 - **To enhance quality of life and general wellbeing**

From the web-page of the Tuscan health authorities



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ora puoi scegliere.
Anche la fitoterapia,
se vuoi.

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Contro le allergie
ora puoi scegliere.
Anche l'omeopatia,
se vuoi.

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Contro il mal di testa
ora puoi scegliere.
Anche l'agopuntura,
se vuoi.

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Cancer patients in Tuscany and Denmark

- Tuscany:
 - 17 % use some form of CAM
 - They expect and experience CAM to improve physical wellbeing and relieve adverse effects of the chemo
- Denmark:
 - Approx. 50 % use some form of CAM
 - They expect and experience CAM to improve physical and emotional wellbeing, to relieve adverse effects of chemo, and to prevent future cancer

Patients' assessment of effectiveness

Research that investigate users' subjective experience and evaluation of 'CAM' demonstrates they find CAM to be:

**Safe 'non-invasive' and 'non-poluting'
treatment for chronic diseases**

**More whole-person oriented
than conventional treatment**

**Supporting 'things you can do
yourself' to improve your health**

**Able to reduce
symptoms,
to improve well-being and
support quality of life**



Thank you