

Needs Assessment:

Utilization and interest in integrative medicine among primary care patients in a Family Medicine Clinic

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Background

- Driven to further improve patient healthcare in the United States, integrating conventional medicine with complementary and alternative medicines (CAM) has become an increasingly emerging area of interest.¹
- Nearly two thirds of medical schools have now incorporated courses and/or clerkships in complementary and alternative medicine.²



Complementary Medicine by definition

- Practices used together with conventional Western Medicine, including but not limited to natural products (i.e. herbs, vitamins, minerals, or probiotics) and mind and body practices (i.e. yoga, massage, acupuncture)³
- While neither concentration has the potential to cure all health ailments, their integration has the potential to further strengthen the current healthcare system.



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2. Wetzel MS, Eisenberg DM, Kaptchuk TJ. Courses Involving Complementary and Alternative Medicine at US Medical Schools. *JAMA*. 1998;280(9):784-787. doi:10.1001/jama.280.9.784 <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/integrative-health>
- 3.

Significance in Medicine Today

- Patients who choose CAM usually do so to further improve their health and well-being
- For other populations of patients, CAM has been used to relieve symptoms associated with chronic, or even terminal, illnesses or side effects of conventional treatments
- Alternative, non-pharmacologic pain therapies have already begun to enter the mix of responses to the opioid epidemic.
- Now considered a “national emergency”, several states in the U.S. have begun to implement policies to encourage Medicaid beneficiaries to utilize therapies like acupuncture, massage, and biofeedback to help manage pain and limit reliance on opioids, according to recent health policy surveys
- The opioid epidemic is helping bring natural treatment options to light, not only for pain, but to demonstrate how noninvasive treatments could be further integrated with conventional medicine for various healthcare solutions.



Goals & Objectives

- Given the increasing demand for CAM among the general population and as the practice of integrative medicine increases in family medicine residency programs, our study assesses **patient readiness** to use such services within Swedish Covenant Hospital.
- This study incorporates a **cross-sectional analysis** of outpatient family medicine patients seeking medical care, assessing **previous CAM use, attitudes** and **preferences** for future CAM use.



Methods - Study Questionnaire

Phase 1

The survey was adapted from several prior studies and modified under the SCH family medicine residency director and research associate at Midwestern University CCOM. The study was approved by the Swedish Covenant Hospital Institutional Review Board.

Phase 2

The survey was pilot-tested on several CCOM medical students before distribution to assess comprehension, question clarity, and time for completion of questions. The survey includes a set of demographic questions on: age, gender, education, cultural traditions, religious traditions, annual income, race, marital status, and medical insurance.

Phase 3

Patients were then asked for their CAM use within the last year, interest in learning more about CAM, likelihood of CAM use if it was/was not covered by medical insurance, and attitudes about using CAM resources if they were offered at the clinic.



Methods

- Study Design & Recruitment

- A cross-sectional 35-item print survey was distributed at a Swedish Covenant Hospital Family Medicine private clinic from August 2017 to January 2018.
- Inclusion criteria for the study were:
 - 1) Patient at the clinic seeking medical care,
 - 2) English speaking, and
 - 3) at least 18 years of age.
- Subjects were recruited in the SCMG waiting room by trained medical staff who followed a protocol that fully informed subjects of the contents of the study prior to participating. All patients in the waiting room at the time the volunteers were there were offered the survey.
- Participation in the study was voluntary, and the survey was designed to take no longer than 10 minutes. Participants were encouraged to answer all questions to their completion. No financial incentive was provided.



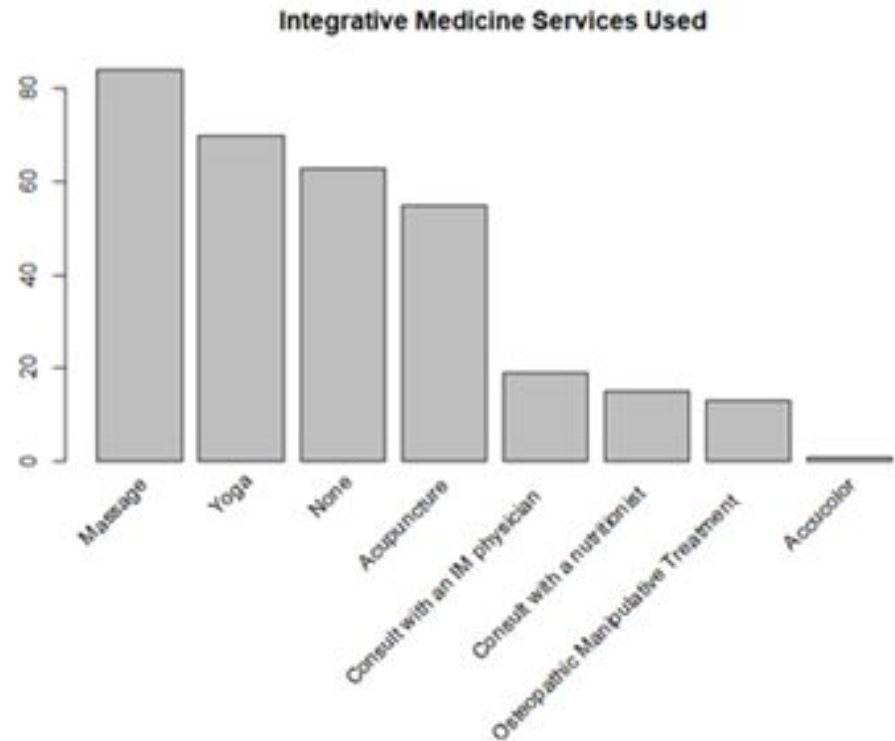
Clinical Demographics & Results

- **194** surveys were collected and analyzed.
- 81% of the survey participants were **female** and 47% were between the ages of 36-50.
- Only **26%** of patients had ever seen an Integrative Medicine doctor.
- **Massage, Acupuncture, Yoga** were the top 3 services that patients have used before
 - Massage: 43%
 - Acupuncture: 28%
 - Yoga: 36%
- Top 5 services that patients would like to see were Massage, Yoga, Meditation, Acupressure, and Herbal Medicine.
- **79%** of survey takers stated they would be interested in services if they were to be offered.
- **48%** of survey takers stated they would be willing to pay <\$50 for integrated medicine services.

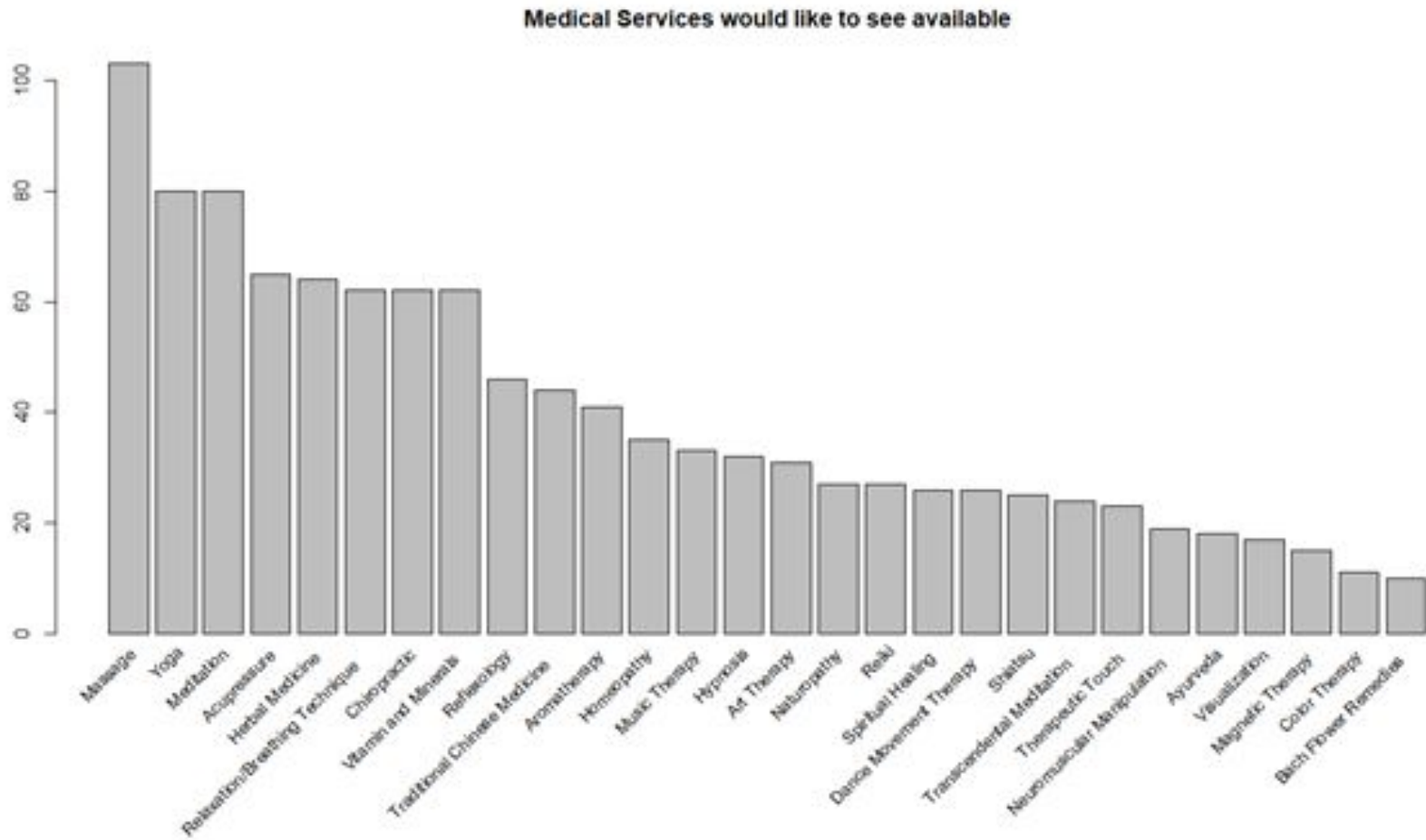


Results / Statistical Analysis - 194 responses

Variable	n/N (%)
Integrative Medicine Services used before	
Accucolor	1/194 (0.5%)
Acupuncture	55/194 (28%)
Consult with an IM physician	19/194 (10%)
Consult with a nutritionist	15/194 (8%)
Massage	84/194 (43%)
Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment	13/194 (7%)
Yoga	70/194 (36%)
None of the services listed	63/194(32%)



Results - Medical Services Pts Would Like to See Available



Results - 194 Responses

Variable	n/N (%)
Interested in Services if offered?	
Yes	143/180 (79%)
No	6/180 (3%)
Unsure	32/180 (18%)
Maximum amount willing to pay for IM service	
< \$50	84/175 (48%)
\$50 - \$120	73/175 (42%)
\$121 - \$200	12/175 (7%)
\$201 - \$500	4/175 (2%)
> \$500	2/175 (1%)
Past year, out of pocket cost for medical visits	
< \$50	53/174 (30%)
\$50 - \$120	33/174 (19%)
\$121 - \$200	22/174 (13%)
\$201 - \$500	27/174 (16%)
> \$500	39/174 (22%)



Discussion

- The surveys provided useful information about the interest in Complementary Alternative Medicine. Though CAM is not frequently commonly used, it is highly desired.
- While our study demonstrates that most patients are very interested in CAM therapies, there are many factors that may limit CAM use, including lack of insurance coverage, lack of education about CAM and overall cost.
- Expanding integrative medicine education and broadening insurance coverage is a possible method to increase access to CAM services. It may be worthwhile to present to the hospital administration to consider offering these services. Not only would CAM services increase patient satisfaction but will take a better well-rounded approach to the health care of patients.
- Although most uses of CAM are thought to be for wellness and prevention, increasing number of studies are showing that CAM is being used as an early approach to manage chronic pain such as low back pain, neck pain, and fibromyalgia. CAM provides a non-pharmacologic option that lowers human as well as financial costs associated with chronic pain and the opioid crisis.



Limitations

- Limited sample size, self-reported data vulnerable to recall bias and social desirability bias
 - While the surveys provided useful information, our demographic was limited in gender, age, insurance status and was performed in a single private clinic, limiting generalizability and external validity to other groups.
- Surveying a larger number of patient with a more diverse population (*i.e.* FQHC patients, pediatric patients, patients with different cultural, educational, and economic backgrounds) would be worth collecting in future studies. It would be useful to find if there is any significant differences in attitude regarding CAM among different age groups, educational backgrounds, and health status. It would also be interesting to evaluate specific needs of different patient populations in order to best accommodate them.
- We did not investigate the specific CAM modalities patients used for a particular diagnosis. This topic may warrant further study in order to specifically address major health concerns of patients such as chronic pain.
- The next phase in this study would be to assess reasons for or even against CAM use.



Conclusion

- Given the complexity of affecting change in certain health conditions, it appears that integrative medicine may offer patients and their providers a variety of options toward improved health outcomes.
- This survey indicates that patients have a positive opinion about using integrative medicine techniques to improve care.
- While our study may not be generalizable across all patient populations, the findings and implications of our study provides a good insight into family medicine patients' attitudes and use of CAM.
- The information supports an opportunity to increase CAM education and provides more resources to our patients who are looking to enhance the quality of their healthcare.



Questions & Comments

Thank you!

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References & Acknowledgements

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