

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**ATTITUDES, USE AND INFORMATION SEEKING
BEHAVIOR FOR COMPLEMENTARY AND
ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE AMONG MALAYSIAN
UNDERGRADUATE PHARMACY STUDENTS**

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ABSTRACT

The study was designed to assess pharmacy students' attitudes, towards barriers and information seeking behavior towards the use of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM). Perceptions regarding the inclusion of CAM in pharmacy curriculum were also evaluated. Cross sectional survey was conducted from August to September 2009. In addition of demographic variables, the personal use, barriers to use, recommend to others, questionnaire was designed to gather information on five aspects of CAM sourcing information and inclusion of CAM in pharmacy curriculum. Thirty five randomly selected undergraduate pharmacy students from all four academic years from three pharmacy institutions across Malaysia was invited to fill in a self administrated questionnaire. Out of 360, 330 were returned. The study showed that Nutritional/dietary supplements including vitamins and minerals 79.4 %, herbal drugs 60.3 %, massage 48.2 %, and faith healing/ prayer house healing 28.8 %. Lack of scientific evidence (84.0%), lack of trained professionals (74.8%), were the most commonly liked barriers to CAM use. It was also reported that media (TV, radio, newspaper) (68.8%), Friends/family members (65.5%), and internet (64.8%), were the most source of information for CAM. Given as well 71.2 % agreed that CAM knowledge is necessary to be well rounded professional and 50.9 % of them believed that CAM is a part of pharmacy and it should be made compulsory in the primary degree. In conclusion, Malaysia pharmacy undergraduate students generally have a positive attitude towards CAM use and integration of CAM in Bpharm curriculum. Further study is required to investigate any topics selected to CAM is required for undergraduate students.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) is defined by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine as “a group of diverse medical and health care systems, practices and products that are not presently considered to be part of conventional medicine”. CAM therapies can be either medication therapies (which involve the use of herbal medicine, animal parts and/ or minerals) or non medication therapies which do not involve any medication such as acupuncture or manual therapy (Hyodo et al., 2005). Many people use complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) for different health problems such as anxiety, allergic disorders, and chronic diseases. When deconstructing the meaning of CAM, it is important to note that the term “alternative” is used for therapies that are substituted for mainstream conventional medicine, whereas “complementary” is the term used for therapies used in conjunction with, not as a replacement for conventional medicine. (Cassileth, et al., 2001). Some CAM users utilize combination of the two methods, but most of them change from one to another or back again (Acadmed, 2001). While consumer interest in CAM has continued to rise, mainstream schools of pharmacy, nursing, and medicine have been