

A New CAM in the Market... Be Positive, Live Healthy

"A merry heart does good like a medicine: but a broken spirit dries the bones."

- King James 2000

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The later part of twentieth century has seen alternative medicine finally becoming a recognized entity, defined as a variant to conventional mode of management of diseases. It was named 'Alternative' as it was regarded as a substitute to the orthodox medical management. Finally the term Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) was coined when combo treatment involving both conventional and alternative methods were used for optimum results.

It was the 21st century that saw the uprising of the CAM as rival of conventional medicine. It has been reported that almost 40% of the adult population rely on Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) to lessen their sufferings. Currently, doctors infrequently combine CAM therapies with conventional medical treatment for best possible outcomes.¹ This trend has its approval from the World Health Organization which emphasizes the role of alternative medicine for all the three components of comprehensive health service delivery namely preventive, promotive and curative care.²

Complementary and Alternative Medicine is synonymous to acupuncture, herbal remedies, naturopathy, homeopathy and chiropractics. Meditative rites like yoga, mindfulness, tai chi and a personal trait of being happy is also included in this blend of alternative treatments. Though himself a conventional healer, it was Hippocrates who actually laid the foundation of CAM. His proposition that the body must be treated as a whole and not in bits and pieces and the power of the body in itself to heal when given adequate amounts of rest, diet and fresh clean environment are the basic core of alternative medicine. His keen observation pointed towards the power of every individual on its own to fight the disease at its own pace. He laid the foundations of mind and body integration and proposed that whatever is generated in the brain can influence the outlook of an individual's own health. He believed that harmony should prevail between the individual's internal and the external environment.³

Hippocrates' insight was further worked upon by Aakster⁴ who in 1986 came up with the differences between conventional and CAM therapies. According to him, CAM differs from mainstream medicine in five ways:

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