

## CHANGING OUTLOOK OF PATIENTS TOWARDS THE USE OF ALTERNATIVE MEDICINES (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BHOPAL CITY).

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### ABSTRACT.

The purpose of this paper is to understand the changing outlook of the patients towards the use of alternative medicines (With reference to Bhopal city). The study was conducted in two medical colleges Hospitals of Ayurvedic, Homeopathy and Unani which included with in-patients and out-patients (n=300). This paper focuses on the sociological perspective on the alternative medicines. Alternative Medicine is defined as any therapeutic practices that do not satisfy the standards of the majority of the orthodox medical community. The diversity of these therapies makes it difficult to categorize the same as a group, yet they are often collectively referred to as 'complementary,' 'alternative', 'integrative', 'unorthodox', 'unconventional,' 'unproven', 'natural', 'traditional and' 'holistic' medicines and are contrasted with "conventional", "mainstream", "allopathic," 'orthodox', "conventional" and "scientific" medicine. According to National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicines (NCCAM), Complementary and Alternative Medicine(CAM) is defined" as a group of diverse medical health care systems, practices, and products that are not presently considered to be part of conventional medicine". These intriguing health alternatives have been practiced for thousands of years, but are just beginning to be recognized in mainstream Western culture as Complementary Medicine or therapy used together with conventional medicine. The term 'alternative medicine' is most widely accepted in the western counties, that are not presently considered to be part of conventional medicine-systems.

### CASE STUDY OF PATIENTS (With reference to Bhopal City).

**Cardiac disease patients** (60%) were in the hospital for data collection as respondents, who were using allopathic medication and changed to alternative system for their treatments. **Cancer Patients** (18%) came to alternative therapies after their ontological treatments from allopathic treatments. **Hemoglobin Deficiency** (Anemia)(10%) were taking alternative therapeutic after the allopathic medications, **Urinary Tract Infection**(UTI)5% (Bacterial infection) of the respondents were showing satisfaction in

alternative medications. **Thyroid Disorders and other Health disorders**(2%) were found in the study that they could feel significant changes in their health from alternative medicines and individualized care.

**The study reveals that why patients use alternative medicines.** The perceived fact emphasizes on treating the whole person, enabling patients to take a more active part in maintaining their health, when orthodox treatment was not effective for their health problem or caused unpleasant side effects, when doctors spent less time with patients, or when patients experienced difficulty in communicating with their doctors. Allopathic medicine has changed from an individual craft or skill to “corporate medicine”.

**Major findings of the study suggest** that, a sizeable percentage of patients who receive conventional medical treatment also use unconventional medicine(CAM). The sociological approach of alternative medicine suggest that the motivation for the pursuit of the different approach of Alternative Medicine signifies the importance of the doctor-patient relationship. More personal and empathic emotions to physician-patient interactions is found in alternative medical therapies. The study reveals that changing outlook of the patients towards alternative medicines includes geographical, cultural and disease-related factors. High cost of the allopathic medication and commercialization, has led towards a change of outlook about alternative medicines. Alternative Medicines, or integrative medicines offers many natural health careers, treatments and health care practices that are beginning to be recognized in the medical community as natural healing mechanisms that promote wellness through disease prevention.

The increasing acceptance and visibility of alternative, natural health and complementary forms of healing suggests systems as “patient-oriented care”. The paper highlights the conditions affecting the patients towards changing outlook and making a shift towards alternative medical-systems..

DECEMBER CONFERENCE

**CHANGING OUTLOOK OF PATIENTS TOWARDS ALTERNATIVE MEDICINES: (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BHOPAL CITY).**

I INTRODUCTION.(1 paragraph)

II THE NOTIONS OF ALTERNATIVE MEDICINES. (6pages)

III THE STUDY OF PATIENTS IN BHOPAL. (6 pages.)

IV EMERGING ISSUES IN THE PRACTICE OF ALTERNATIVE MNEDICINES.(6 pages)

V CONCLUSION. (1 paragraph)

I INTRODUCTION.

In April 1995, the staff of the National Library of Medicine of the United States classified alternative medicine under the category of complementary therapies in their Medical Subjects Heading Section. This became a therapeutic practice in the year 2002 and gave a definition. The definition provided was that alternative medicine therapeutic practices which were not considered as an integral part of the allopathic medicine. Therapies like Ayurveda, Homeopathy, Unani, acupuncture, dietary supplement, dieting, physical therapy like exercises or yoga, etc are termed as alternative medicine. These therapies are called **complementary** when they are used along with allopathic treatments. If they are done in place of allopathic treatments, they are known as **alternative treatments**.

The Term complementary and alternative medicine is used here to describe a wide range of medical systems. It is a different therapeutic practice and alternative health care system. It falls outside the boundaries of Allopathic medications.

The term Complementary Therapy is used to refer to specific therapies that fall under the umbrella of Complementary and Alternative Medicines. (CAM).

## 2.THE NOTION OF ALTERNATIVE MEDICINES.

Complementary and Alternative are the two words used here in reference to CAM (Complementary And Alternative Medicines) as it is practiced in developed countries, particularly in the UK. Complementary Therapists (Ct) refers to any individual, whose primary professional role involves one or more complementary or **alternative therapy**<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> F.J.Hill(Dr.Failh.J. Hill) (2003) CAM, the next generation of health promotion, Health Promotion International, 18,(3) 215-272.

**Health Promotion** – It is an important notion of Alternative Medicines. Health Promotion means preventive methods and curative functions of alternative medicines.

**Lupton**<sup>2</sup> offers an interesting sociological critique of public health, including health promotion, which includes a brief consideration of CAM. She is initially quite positive about alternative medicines arguing that it provides sensitive care for individuals and plays a useful role in challenging the scientific basis of medical orthodoxy. However she expresses concern that CAM, like health promotion in her view, places undue responsibility on the individual.

**Health Promotion and Health Education through alternative medicines.**- The term health promotion covers the promotion of positive health and the prevention of illness, through health education.

**Health promoter**- the term health promoter is used to refer to individuals whose primary professional role involves health promotion as defined here.

**HEA (Health Education Authority)** – In a *Journal Healthiness* (**Millar,1995**<sup>3</sup>) an article describes how elderly residents appear to have gained from the introduction of complementary therapies into the routine of residential homes.

**Funding National Health Services to Alternative Medicines.** - Other type of article find to focus on either the introduction and/or Funding of complementary medicine in the National Health Service. (NHS.) (Nelson<sup>4</sup>,1995)

**Effectiveness and Safety of Alternative Medicines.** – The effectiveness and/or safety of particular therapies are confirmed from various incidents. **Samarel,N**<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> F.J.Hill,(1994 & 1995) CAM,the next generation of health promotion, Health promotion international,18,(3) 215-266.

<sup>3</sup> Miller, J. (1995) Complementary Therapies find a welcome home,"Healthiness",28,20.

<sup>4</sup> Nelson,F.(1995) "Alternative forms of Funding, "Healthlines" 21,17.

<sup>5</sup> Samarel,N.(1975)"Therapeutic Touch, dialogue and women's experiences in breast cancer surgery ", "Holistic Nursing Practice", 12,62-70

Describes various kinds of sickness and patients rejected in allopathic treatment, were having **significant changes** and completely curative by alternative medications.

**Gibson<sup>6</sup> et al**,1995 comments a number of approaches to alternative medicines which seem to me to be entirely in tune with the underlying concepts and principles of **health promotion**.

**HEALTH EDUCATION GUIDE**- The UK health Promotion publication that is most frequently mentioned in relation to CAM is the “Health Education Guide to complementary Medicine and Therapies.”(**Woodham<sup>7</sup>**,A.1994) It gives a brief introduction to the relationship between CAM and biomedicine and then offers an A-to-Z guide to the most popular forms of CAM available in the UK, but it does not attempt to explore issues concerning the Health Promotion through complementary and alternative medicines.( HP-CAM) (**Woodham, et al<sup>8</sup>**).

**WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION.(WHO)** - World Health Organization’s approach to health promotion: there has been some discussion in the CAM literature concerning in world health organization’s approach to Health Promotion. For example, an article in the “International Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine” discussed the relationship between primary Health Care(as recommended by WHO charters and declarations) complementary medicine and Health promotion.(**Correa<sup>9</sup>**,1999).

**Whitehead** argues that health Promotion and CAM, are closely related and draws attention to similarities in philosophy between health promotion and CAM, concluding that constructive dialogue between CAM and health promotion could lead to a positive paradigm shift to contemporary health care. However,

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<sup>6</sup> Gibson, L., Leavey, C.,Viggiani,N. and Sands,R.(1995) Interviews: Professor Don Nutbean.”The Journal of Contemporary Health”,2,18-19

<sup>7</sup> Woodham,A.(1994) HEA Guide to complementary Medicine and Therapies. Health Education Council, London.

<sup>8</sup> Woodham A, and Peters,D(1997), ‘Encyclopedia of ‘complementary medicines’, Dorting Kindersley, London.

<sup>9</sup> CorreaA.I(1999), Complementary and Primary Health Care. International Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine, August, 10-11.

whitehead is more persuasive than analytical and does not address, for example, the different models of health promotion commonly found in the literature or the diversity of forms of CAM available to the Public. (**Whitehead**<sup>10</sup>.(1999).

**HOLISTIC HEALTH PROMOTION-** In a health promotion book “A guide for Practice” (**Dossey**,<sup>11</sup> *et al.* **1989**) the authors are interested in *highly individualistic, transpersonal view of health* that goes beyond or even against, much contemporary health promotion.

**INTERFACE OF HP-CAM.** – Complementary and Alternative Medicines texts that it include aspects of the Health Promotion that would be acceptable to many professional health promoters(**Woodham and Peters** <sup>12</sup>1999).

### **NOTION OF ALTERNATIVE MEDICINES.**

Alternative Medicine is referred to any substance, activity, or practice not usually taught in detail or recommended to a medical student.

**OAM AND NCCAM.:-** According to the Office of Alternative Medicine(now the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine) defined complementary and alternative medicine is” as a Broad domain of healing resources that encompasses all health systems, modalities, and practices and their accompanying theories and belief, other than those intrinsic to the politically dominant health system” .... And those boundaries....are not always sharp or fixed.

**Role of Alternative medicine in Modern Society.** Typically, alternative medicine differs from allopathic medicine in that alternative medicine is older and what we might call them as non-allopathic (or unconventional) . Alternative medicine does not follow the science and research like that of current allopathic medicine undergo. According to the National Institute of Health, the” Alternative medicine

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<sup>10</sup> Whitehead.D.(1999)”The relationship between health promotion and complementary Therapies,”Complementary Therapies in Nursing and Midwifery”, 5,171-175.

<sup>11</sup> Dossey, B.M., Keegan,L., Kolkmeir,L.G., and Guzetta,C.E.(1989)”Holistic Health Promotion”, A Guide for practice, Aspen Publication, Rockville,London.

<sup>12</sup> Woodham,A.,Peters,D.,(1999),”Encyclopaedia of complementary Medicine, Dorling, Kindersely, London.

could also be termed complementary when the therapies that can be integrated into current allopathic medication. (*NIH*<sup>13</sup> 1995) For example, a cancer patient underwent Chemotherapy in allopathic treatment and afterwards take alternative system of medicines as dietary supplements, diet control, yoga, exercises, Ayurvedic therapeutic and activities for the rest of the time . This will help the detoxification process of the body, so that building up of the strength and regaining the vitality in the human body. This is done by the Complementary and Alternative Medications (CAM) .

**Sociological Perspective Of Alternative Medicines.** Alternative medicines as those healing resources that provides all health systems and practices that are different from the allopathic health system of a particular society or culture. Usually, therapies like Ayurveda, herbal medicine, folk medicine, homeopathy, acupuncture, naturopathy, diet practices, music therapy massage, pranic healing etc are classified as alternative or complementary medicine.

People who do not find a cure, remedy or success in allopathic medicine generally try alternative medicine. Such people generally suffer from cancer arthritis, acquired immune deficiency syndrome(AIDS), chronic back pain, etc. Therapies included under alternative medicine would cease to be included in category once their efficacy is proven and they are considered safe and effective.

Twenty years ago **insurance would not pay for them**( for those users of alternative medications) as they were considered “alternative and ineffective”. But Today thousands of people have been helped by alternative medications and they are recognized by Insurance companies and AM are now recognized in the medical community.

Over the years, more and more people have been using alternative medicine because allopathic medications are not working for them successfully. The 2004 survey by the National Center for Complementary & Alternative Medicine of the United states revealed that approximately 36% of Americans used alternative

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<sup>13</sup> NIH, 1995, The Panel of National Institute of Health, Bethesda, Maryland, worked on “Definition & Description of CAM, “ CAM Research Methodology Conference, Office of Alternative Medicine.

medicine in 2002. If alternative medicine is used in conjunction with allopathic medicine, an integrative doctor is a person's best option.

The concern in using alternative medicine stems from the fact that some practitioners of alternative medicine do not have an accredited medical degree and therefore do not have a valid medical license. However, in recent times, many educational institutions and universities have started offering courses in homeopathy, Ayurveda and unani etc.

The recent growth in this alternative and complementary medical system is evident by the many people demanding different, and in some cases better, care than what they are receiving in "Modern allopathic Medicine". They are no longer accepting the fact that they need to suffer with pain or illness because modern pharmacy does not have a magic bullet for them.

Some allopathic doctors are adamantly against or simply do not believe in complementary or alternative medications, even though research continues to show the benefits of many compounds. Your doctor should be informed about other approaches you may be using and if they are not comfortable with that then always feel free to choose another doctor. This would enable the doctor to foresee any possible complications or a better time in which to use a complementary therapy.(Dr. Darren Dunner<sup>14</sup>)

## **SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF ALTERNATIVE AND COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINES.**

Allopathic treatments practitioners of scientific medicine looked down upon alternative treatments as unscientific medicine. At the same time, many alternate healers dismissed practitioners of scientific medicine as arrogant, aloof and uncompassionate. Today the two sides appear to have signed a truce and are attempting to find common ground. This common ground consists of a compromise called complementary medicine. In alternative and complementary

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<sup>14</sup> Dr.Darren Dunner,(2007) an Article on "Alternative Medicine." Article source <http://www.facr.org>,  
<http://EzineArticle.com>



medical treatment, medical professors allow alternative practices as long as they do not harm the patient.

**Alternative Medicine Means Respect for Patient.**- An example of complementary medicine would be for a surgeon to allow a patient to meditate or use an energy therapy before and after surgery. These therapies don't interfere in the surgery and they often contribute to the psychological well being of the patient.

Another reason why complementary medicine has become popular is the changing attitude towards patients on the part of doctors and other health professionals. Many of the allopathic treatments-doctors considered themselves as "*all wise and all knowing experts on health matters*" until recent decades.

This attitude meant that many doctors held their patients thoughts and opinions in contempt.

Today doctors and other health professionals are taught to respect their patients and their opinions. Part of the reason for this respect is the growing number of women doctors. Women are often more empathetic and understanding than men are. Until quite recently most doctors were men and they were taught to boss their patients around.

Since doctors have to respect their patients opinions they have to listen to their ideas about medicine. This means doctors are forced to take patients beliefs into account and respect them.

**Alternative Medicines and Complementary Medicine Equals Opportunity.** – The spread of complementary medicine is creating many opportunities for alternative healthcare professionals. Many medical clinics, hospitals and other healthcare facilities are now employing dietary supplements distributors, herbalists, acupuncturists and other alternative medical practitioners.

Some medical facilities now have such professionals on staff and offer many alternate treatments to their patients on a regular basis. It is very common for Ayurvedic, Homeopathic and Unani and Massage therapists to be involved in physical therapy and patient rehabilitation for example.

**Prayer and meditation-** Many practitioner of allopathic medicine also recognize the healing potential of some alternative practices. Prayer and meditation are widely recognized as being beneficial to the healing process. Patients who engage in these practices may develop a better attitude and recover faster.

This means that there will be growing opportunities for allopathic and alternative healthcare workers. Many healthcare providers will be looking for professionals who have knowledge of both.

Alternative medicine is a fairly broad term which covers many different methods of treatment such as Ayurvedic, Homeopathic and Unani, Traditional Chinese Medicine,(TCM),faith healing etc. ***Alternative medicine is a comprehensive approach to healing that uses natural methods to bring physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual harmony.*** Alternative medicine systems believe body has a network of channels (meridians) that carry a subtle form of life energy. Since it uses a holistic approach and time-tested, natural remedies, hands-on treatments to help enable the body's own innate powers to do the healing, alternative medicine requires the patient to take a highly active part in healing their own body including prevention and treatment.

Complementary and Alternative medicines, ***therapies are used to improve wellness, prevent disease or treat health problems but the most popular and prevalent use remains pain control.*** Included in complementary medicine are a large number of practices and systems of health care like acupuncture, homeopathy, Ayurvedic, Unani, reflexology etc. Complementary medicine also includes dietary and nutritional therapies such as macrobiotics, vegetarianism, and orthomolecular medicine. Although Complementary and Alternative Medicine is starting to gain popularity in the West, most clinical research by the health care industry continues to focus on the success of each single modality or therapy within these systems.

**Career Opportunities in Alternative and Complementary Medicines-** Complementary and Alternative Medicine is going to be the future of medicine. Patients will increasingly expect healthcare professionals to have knowledge of both allopathic and alternative therapies.

Healthcare organizations will be more willing to make room on their staffs for practitioners of alternative medicine. Individuals who are willing to get an education in both worlds of medicine will be more likely to get the healthcare jobs of the future if they have an education in complementary and alternative medicine.

#### IV EMERGING ISSUES IN THE PRACTICE OF ALTERNATIVE MNEDICINES.(6 pages)

The achievement of Allopathic medications over the last few decades has been quite remarkable. No one can question the benefits that immunization, anti-biotic, hip-replacements and organ transplantation have brought to millions of people world-wide. The advances, however, also highlight those conditions where progress has been slower, with patients increasingly seeking help from complementary and alternative therapies. In general, these are chronic complaints in which patient, illness and complex psychosocial factors so interact as to make standard therapeutic guidelines difficult to devise. In these instances, the care must be truly **"patient-centered"** care that is respectful of and responsive to individual patient preferences, needs and values and ensuring that patient values guide all clinical decisions. While the case for this type of holistic approach is no longer controversial, as scientifically reliable studies have been undertaken.

All clinicians are aware that many patients are interested in and choose to use a range of alternative medicinal therapies. Those practicing allopathic medicines must be aware of the existence and range of such therapies, why such patients use them, and how these might affect other type of treatment that patients are receiving. Increasingly, alternative medicine options are offered alongside allopathic treatment in general practice and elsewhere. Although not all medicine can be evidenced-based we must ensure that any treatment is in the patient's best interests, and continue to assess and evaluate clinical options.

A sizeable percentage of patients receiving allopathic medical treatment also use alternative medical help. Surveys indicate that the prevalence of and motivation

for the pursuit of the different approaches of alternative medicines, is subject to geographical, cultural and disease-related factors. I am interested in the concurrent use of and attitude towards Alternative Medications in patents who underwent allopathic treatment in the Regional Cancer Center, in Bhopal Hospital. Many rejected cases of Cancer in advanced stages were cured by Traditional Chinese Medicines, like Spirulina dietary supplements. The specialty of this Food Supplement is that detoxification process is initiated in the Body, thereby Cancerous Tumor cells were removed from the body. Heart ailments were cured by removing LDL(Low Density Lipoprotein) Complications of Diabetic problems were comparatively reduced with those Food Supplementary items.

**Importance Of Alternative Medicines Are Increased Nationally.** Interest in alternative and complementary medical practices has grown considerably in recent years. This interest has been seen in government, the general population, and among practicing physicians. The National institutes of health established the Office of Alternative Medicine in 1992, which in 1998 became the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, with a budget of \$104.6 million for fiscal year 2002. The use of alternative or complementary therapies by the US population appears to be substantial. In surveys of the general population, **Eisenberg and colleagues**<sup>15</sup>, reported that in 1990 such therapies were used by an estimated 34% of the population, increasing to 42% in 1997. According to their surveys, more visits were made to alternative medical practitioners than to all the primary care physicians in those years and the **out-of-pocket** outlay closely revealed or exceeded similar payments for all hospitalizations for the same periods.

**Specialties of Alternative Medications.** Alternative Medicines treatment is defined as therapy not offered by Allopathic medications and is one more of the following treatments' folk and traditional medicine,-medicinal herbs, Chinese Medicines,(including acupuncture) Homeopathy, nutritional therapy(nutritional supplement and diets specifically designed for cancer treatment) mind-body

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<sup>15</sup> Eisenberg DM, Kessler RC.,Foster C.,NorlockFF.,Calkins DR,Delbanco TL.,”Unconventional medicine in the United States. Prevalence, costs and patterns of use. N.Engl.J.Med. 1993;328;246-52.

techniques(meditation, guided imagery and relaxation). Therapeutic touch(massage, shiatsu, and reflexology) movement and manipulation therapies(chiropractic, yoga, and Alexander and Feldenkrias methods) and anthroposophical medicines.

**The Role of Spirituality in Alternative Medications.** Spirituality has an important role to play in Alternative Medications. Spirituality was defined as a sense of meaning and purpose in life, faith and comfort with existential concerns. The author simplified this definition, adjusting to it, “discuss spiritual aspects(meaning of disease, life and death and making a mindful decision in choosing treatment. The patients’ health providers view spiritual themes as an important reason for the use of alternative medicines. Health providers relate more to spiritual and alternative medicines issues during medical discussions. The integration of these themes into a biopsychosocial-spiritual approach may enrich the dialogue between patients and health providers. It was hypothesized that alternative medicines and spiritual issues may share common features. Indeed, certain alternative modalities refer to spirituality as part of a holistic **conceptualization**<sup>16</sup>of the Individual. (Moss,D)

**Oriental Philosophies** such as Traditional Chinese, Tibetan and Ayurvedic (India) medicine perceive health as a harmonious equilibrium between fundamental elements that corresponds to physical, emotional **and spiritual manifestations**<sup>17</sup>in humans.(Chan et al)

**Western Modalities** such as Homeopathy and anthro-osophical medicine extend the biomedical paradigm and view health and disease as related either to “life-force”(vital-force).(Bell IR et al<sup>18</sup>) or to the complexity of body, mind and soul.(Cantor IS et al)<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> Moss, D(2002),”The circle of the Soul:the role of spirituality in health care. App. Psychophysical Biofeedback 27:283-297.

<sup>17</sup> Chan C, Ho, Ps, Chow E.(2001), A Body-Mind-Spirit model in Health, an Eastern approach, Soc.Worl Health Care 34:261-282.

<sup>18</sup> Bell IR (2004) Lewis DA II, Lewis Se et al “Strength of vital force in classical homeopathy:biopsychosocial-spiritual correlates within a complex systems context. Journal of Altern.Complement amed.10:123-131

**People want an emphasis on “Wellness”, not Illness.** Because many people want to learn more about self-care, fitness(wellness and preventive measures). Allopathic medications may be seen as a narrow, restorative, disease-(complaint) oriented approach that aims to destroy, demolish or suppress illness-inducing forces through such things as chemical therapies and surgery. What many people want is an emphasis on natural restorative process. The emphasis is quite different-illness vs. wellness. Alternative Medicines is often seen as restorative, balanced, natural and preventive fitting in with the particular problems of the patents.

**Many people believe in the”holistic” message.** It seems obvious to most that lifestyle, personal relationships and work operate all together and simultaneously have an impact on health. Equally they believe that there are many and manifold signs of wellness and illness from digestion, sleep patterns and body appearance to more subtle nonverbal signs associated balance, body odor and so on. The implication is that the diagnostic interview may need to include questions about all aspects of the person’s life, not only their physical symptoms.

**Comparative study of users and nonusers of alternative medications.** Comparisons of users and non-users of alternative medicines have shown evidence of different beliefs about health and disease in general (Vincent & Furnham,1997)<sup>20</sup>

There is some evidence that **frequent alternative users are more health conscious**, and believe more strongly that people can influence their own state of health, both by lifestyle and through maintaining a psychological equilibrium. Users of alternative appears to have less faith in “provider control”- the ability of medicine (specifically allopathic doctors) to resolve problems of ill health. Some studies of cancer patients using alternative medicines have found that they were

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<sup>19</sup> Cantor IS, Rosenzweig S (1997), Anthroposophic perspective in primary care, Pri.Care 24:867-887.

<sup>20</sup> Vincent,C & Furnham, A (1999), Complementary medicine:State of the evidence. “Journal of the Royal society of Medicine,92,170-177.

more likely than those not using alternative medications, to believe cancer was preventable through diet supplement, stress reduction and environmental changes and to believe that patients should take an active role in their own health. (Cassileth, 1988).<sup>21</sup>

**Environmentalism, anti-Materialism and a belief in ‘one world’:** Many users of Alternative Medicines seem to be sympathetic with green issues, ideas and undetstaning. These include environmentalism, anti-materialism and a belief in “one world”.

Alternative Medical users belief that they may also include issues around **inequality, alienation, and social exclusion**. Alternative Medicinal users-as patients they also seem to be interested in general consumer affair issues and ma y even belong to bodies that attempt to lobby in favour of a certain position. They appear to **be sensitive to consumer rights, bad practice and poor treatment**.

Alternative Medical patients appear to be particularly interested in the “life of the mind”. They certainly believe the maxim of “ **a healthy mind and a healthy body**.” Alternative Medical patients are because of their own medical condition, likely to **be very empathic to the plight of others**, and hostile to the “**uncaring**” **attitude of certain specialists” (e.g. surgeons)**.

In terms of demography, those who use Alternative Medications are more likely to be women, aged 30-40, middle rather than working class, educated above average levels, and to live in urban rather than rural areas. Their medical history is more likely to feature chronic problems than **acute, often non-specific** or with a heavy psychological (i.e. non physical) component. Many patients have a “thick file” in the sense that their interest in health issues has led them to seek out **various remedies from many different sources**.

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<sup>21</sup> Cassileth,B,(1988), Unorthodox cancer medicine. “Cancer Investigation, 4,591-598.

However, despite some differences in beliefs, it is dangerous and foolhardy to talk about the 'typical' user. Alternative Medications rejoices in differences and individuality and the **uniqueness** of people's lives.

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