

Centre for Cross-disciplinary Evaluation Studies in Complementary and Alternative Medicine Center for tværvidenskabelige evalueringsstudier af komplementær og alternativ behandling

# 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....

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# How many people use CAM?

Survey data show usage between 3%



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# How many people use CAM?

... and 83%



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## 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?

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# 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 i Denmark and Italy can illustrate the diversity....

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# 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'

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# Some notes on healthcare in Denmark Opotek Faculty of Health Sciences ▼UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN DENMARK.CK Copotek Faculty of Health Sciences



## Two different worlds...

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

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# **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

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# From the web-page of the Tuscan health authorities



### **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

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## Patients' assesment 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

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# Thank you

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