

MANIFESTO

European Parliament Elections 2019



<https://cam-europe.eu>

COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE for sustainable patient-centred healthcare

EUROCAM is the European foundation that represents the views and interests of various European umbrella organisations that are made up of either patients or Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) practitioners. This includes doctors, veterinarians and practitioners who practise various disciplines of CAM in Europe.

EUROCAM covers a broad spectrum of CAM modalities, including acupuncture, Ayurveda, anthroposophic medicine, herbal medicine, homeopathic medicine, naturopathic or traditional European medicine, osteopathy and traditional Chinese medicine.

The practice of CAM modalities affiliated to EUROCAM is based on clinical expertise, which has been collected in the course of their existence, and the best available clinical evidence from scientific research built over the last few decades.

Through the umbrella organisations, EUROCAM represents 60,000 organised patients/citizens, 250 national CAM associations and a substantial part of the 400,000 physicians, veterinarians and practitioners in this sector across Europe.

Current challenges to healthcare in Europe

EU health systems are facing a number of challenges, like ageing populations, antimicrobial resistance, non-communicable diseases and soaring healthcare costs.¹

CAM can make a substantial contribution to address these health policy issues as CAM treatments are more adapted to the individual needs of patients and complement conventional medicine to improve treatment outcomes.

Moreover, CAM modalities can often be used as a first option in treating many conditions, reducing the use of usually costly conventional drugs, which nevertheless would remain for use if required.

CAM modalities can help to prevent the long-term dependency on conventional medication and to reduce the enormous burden of mortality and morbidity caused by the adverse effects of conventional drugs.

Therefore, EUROCAM calls on the European Parliament, the Commission and the Council, in the 2019-2024 legislature, to include CAM in their policies to tackle the following issues:

¹Companion 2017 report on the State of Health in the EU, European Commission, available from https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/state/docs/2017_companion_en.pdf



Resistance to antimicrobials (AMR)

Resistance to antimicrobials (AMR) is a complex international public health problem that has already reached alarming levels in many parts of the world. It is estimated to be responsible for 33,000 deaths per year and costs €1.5 billion annually in healthcare costs and productivity losses.²

Prudent and appropriate use of antimicrobials is therefore of the essence. One of the strategies to achieve this aim is the use of effective and safe non-antibiotic treatments of infections.

There is some evidence that CAM prevention and treatment strategies can lead to the prescription and consumption of fewer antibiotics and some of the CAM treatment strategies have been shown to be effective in systematic reviews.³ Surgeries employing general practitioners additionally trained in CAM have lower antibiotic prescribing rates.⁴ By building and maintaining resistance to infectious illness, CAM modalities mobilise and stimulate the self-regulating capacity of the organism, thus increasing its resilience. Greater resilience leads to a swift and sustained recovery from infections and a reduced susceptibility to future infections and less reliance on antibiotics.

CAM can therefore support the EU strategy to conserve and steward the effectiveness of existing antimicrobial treatments and offer an avenue for the development of novel future therapies.

AntiMicrobial Resistance the burden

EUROCAM calls on the EU political leaders to

- Initiate and support the inclusion of CAM therapies as effective and safe non-antibiotic treatments for infections;
- Initiate and support further research investment into non-antibiotic treatment options for infections as put forward by CAM;
- Support Member States in the integration of CAM treatment of infections in primary healthcare.

² https://ec.europa.eu/health/amr/antimicrobial-resistance_en

³ Baars EW et al. The Contribution of Complementary and Alternative Medicine to Reduce Antibiotic Use: A Narrative Review of Health Concepts, Prevention, and Treatment Strategies. *Evid Based Complement Alternat Med*, 2019;5365608.

⁴ van der Werf ET et al. Do NHS GP surgeries employing GPs additionally trained in integrative or complementary medicine have lower antibiotic prescribing rates? Retrospective cross-sectional analysis of national primary care prescribing data in England in 2016. *BMJ Open*. 2018 Mar 5;8(3):e020488.



Non-Communicable diseases

NCDs, including cancer, cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes account for 70% of all deaths and more than three out of four years lived with a disability.

Up to 80% of health care budgets across the EU are spent on treating chronic diseases, the total costs for EU economies being €115 billion.⁵

Prevention is key to avoid ill health and achieve a high level of mental and physical well-being effectively and efficiently.

Healthy lifestyle modifications including nutritional counselling, exercise training, and stress management techniques improve outcomes for patients at risk and for those who already have common NCDs.

If lifestyle modifications alone are not sufficient to restore health, CAM modalities are especially appropriate to support and induce the self-regenerating process of the individual. With the aid of medicines of natural origin and the patient's own commitment to change, CAM aims to restore health. Improving health implies reducing not only the disease process, but also the susceptibility to illness and disease. This diminishes the need for conventional drugs and high-cost medical interventions.

NCDs, number one cause of death and disability worldwide

EUROCAM calls on the EU political leaders to

- Encourage Member States to take note of World Health Assembly resolutions WHA62.13 and WHA67.18 that urged Member States to:
 - integrate Traditional Medicine (TM) and CAM within national healthcare systems by developing and implementing national TM policies and programmes;
 - promote the safety, efficacy and quality of TM/CAM by expanding the knowledge base and providing guidance on regulatory and quality assurance standards;
 - establish systems for the qualification, accreditation or licensing of TM/CAM practitioners;
 - increase the availability and affordability of TM/CAM.
- Encourage Member States to take note of the WHO's Traditional Medicine Strategy 2014-2023, which support Member States in developing proactive policies and implementing action plans that will strengthen the role Traditional Medicine (TM) and CAM plays in keeping populations healthy;
- Support Member States with knowledge transfer of integration of conventional medicine and CAM to enable more effective, accessible and resilient health systems;
- Promote the inclusion of CAM in all possible EU public health policy and programmes dealing with health education and promotion, prevention and treatment of chronic disease, health inequalities, and active and healthy ageing;
- Improve EU legislation and regulation of CAM medicinal products, practices and providers, and facilitate their free circulation.

⁵ OECD/EU (2018), Health at a Glance: Europe 2018: State of Health in the EU Cycle, OECD Publishing, Paris. https://doi.org/10.1787/health_glance_eur-2018-en



Reducing healthcare costs

The cost of healthcare is expected to double by 2050 if reforms are not undertaken.⁶ More focus is needed on prevention, addressing health (proactively) not just diseases (reactively). The European Commission takes the position that “more holistic, person-centred health data will have an enormous potential for improving the quality of care and the performance of health systems across the EU”.⁷ With its focus on supporting patient literacy and empowerment as well as enhancing and maintaining health, integration of CAM's holistic, patient-centred methodologies and understanding into primary care can have long-term benefits for patients' and public health in general. The use of CAM modalities offers financial sustainability by encouraging disease prevention and treatment via less costly interventions that potentially lead to long lasting outcomes of treatment. In addition, CAM can help reduce the serious problems of the use of multiple drugs (polypharmacy) and side effects of conventional drugs. There is a growing body of evidence indicating that integration of CAM into primary care not only improves citizens' health but can potentially offer short- and long-term savings in healthcare costs.^{8,9} However, despite the wide use and big potential of CAM, funding of CAM research in Europe is still marginal. The CAM sector alone cannot be expected to support the research to prove these possibilities. Like mainstream medical research, there is a social responsibility for government to fund such research. As for conventional medicine there should be industry-independent funded research.

Reducing healthcare costs by integrating CAM into existing healthcare systems

EUROCAM calls on the EU political leaders to

- Explore the ways in which CAM can contribute to sustainable healthcare systems including its role in health maintenance, health education, self-responsibility for health, motivation for healthy lifestyle change and less invasive and more cost-effective treatment of illness;
- Mainstream CAM in all EU health initiatives;
- Mainstream CAM in all EU health research initiatives;
- Support Member States with knowledge transfer of integration of conventional medicine and CAM to enable more effective, accessible and resilient health systems;
- Facilitate mutual recognition of national professional qualifications of CAM providers;
- Improve EU legislation and regulation of CAM medicinal products

⁶ <http://bruegel.org/2016/01/innovation-and-sustainability-of-european-healthcare-systems/>

⁷ State of Health in the EU, Companion report published by the European Commission, 2017.

⁸ Herman PM et al. Are complementary therapies and integrative care cost-effective? A systematic review of economic evaluations. *BMJ Open*. 2012; 2(5): e001046.

⁹ <https://www.naturalmedicinejournal.com/journal/2013-02/economic-evaluation-complementary-and-alternative-medicine>



Patients have access to more information and are taking an active role in the choice of their healthcare provisions. Their rights as consumers have increased in European legislation over the years. The freedom of choice regarding the best healthcare in individual cases contribute to the trust and satisfaction of the users in the healthcare system. This is in line with the European Charter of Patients' Rights, which lists fourteen patients' rights, including the right of access to the health services that answer the individual patient's health needs, the right to information, the right to personalised treatment and the right to choose freely from among different treatment procedures and providers.¹⁰

Currently, one in two EU citizens uses CAM in one form or another as part of their healthcare, whether as a complement to, or an alternative to conventional care.¹¹ According to the report by the EU Commission financed CAMbrella project (2010-2012) which assessed the situation of CAM in Europe, people use CAM because they are dissatisfied with orthodox medicine and favour more natural and gentle methods of healing, preferably within existing healthcare systems.¹² Yet, the high demand is not reflected in EU or national health policy or provision. In addition, there is a huge diversity in its regulation across the EU determining who can practise CAM, what qualifications are required and how services are offered and financed. This patchy provision means that citizens experience practical and attitudinal barriers that limit their access to and use of CAM. To redress these inequalities, a pan-European process should be initiated to establish an appropriate regulation of providers of CAM throughout the EU with appropriate guarantees.

Citizens' freedom of choice in healthcare

EUROCAM calls on the EU political leaders to

support the right of patients to choose the treatment they want to receive and trust, by promoting:

- Implementation of Union legislation in cross-border healthcare regarding CAM;
- Increased integration of CAM into healthcare system;
- Improved EU regulation of CAM products, practices and providers;
- Greater investment in researching CAM's benefits and risks.

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¹⁰ <http://www.activecitizenship.net/patients-rights/materials.html>

¹¹ http://cordis.europa.eu/news/rcn/35388_en.html

¹² Nissen N et al. Citizens' needs and attitudes towards CAM, CAMbrella WP3 report, 2012