

MANIFESTO

European Parliament 2019-2024



<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 issue:

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.