

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

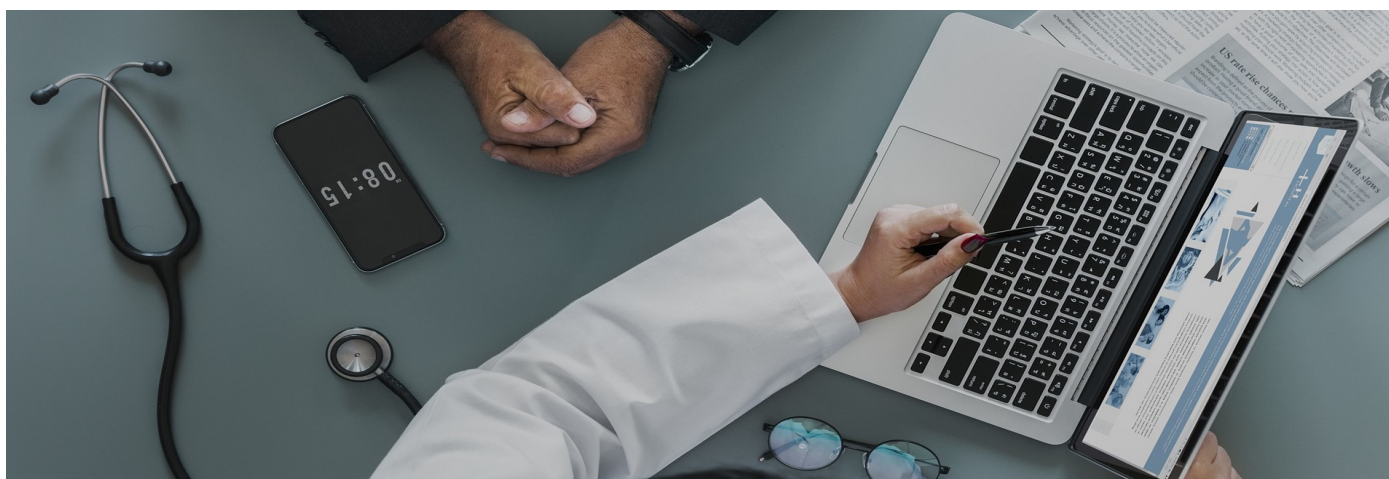
CAM can make a substantial contribution to address these health policy issues as CAM treatments are more adapted to the individual needs of patients and complement conventional medicine to improve treatment outcomes.

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 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



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

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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>