

Introduction to Integrative Medicine in the Primary Care Setting



Melinda Ring, MD, ABOIM*, Rupa Mahadevan, MD

KEYWORDS

• Integrative medicine • Complementary medicine • Alternative medicine • Philosophy

KEY POINTS

- Integrative medicine has been described as “healing oriented medicine that takes account of the whole person (body, mind, and spirit) including all aspects of lifestyle; it emphasizes therapeutic relationships and makes use of all appropriate therapies, both conventional and alternative.”
- National surveys consistently report that approximately one-third of adults and 12% of children use complementary and integrative medicine approaches.
- Although there are barriers to primary care professionals engaging in discussions about lifestyle change and complementary and integrative medicine options, there is also great potential to impact patient well-being.
- Primary care providers can begin to incorporate integrative care into their current practice by engaging in education; collecting key tools and reliable resources; identifying local organizations or integrative medicine professionals to support care; considering new care models; and learning how to identify patients who will be most amenable to the information.
- Primary care professionals are in a strong position to advise patients in the safe use of integrative medicine and can collaborate with integrative medicine-trained physicians as well as complementary medicine providers to provide integrative team-based care.

INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE

Sir William Osler said, “The good physician treats the disease; the great physician treats the patient who has the disease.” Great health professionals differ from good ones because they understand the entire story. Each patient represents a story that includes their disease process, their environment, their social situation, and their belief

Departments of Medicine and Medical Social Sciences, Osher Center for Integrative Medicine, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, 150 East Huron Avenue, Suite 1100, Chicago, IL 60611, USA

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: mring@nm.org

Prim Care Clin Office Pract 44 (2017) 203–215

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pop.2017.02.006>

0095-4543/17/© 2017 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

primarycare.theclinics.com

system. As the full story is explored, information is gained to guide appropriate diagnoses and management plans that are aligned with a patient's goals. This partnership between a health professional and a patient is at the heart of integrative medicine, and indeed, all of medicine. Integrative medicine changes the focus from disease and illness to health and healing and uses lifestyle approaches as the base of all subsequent care. An integrative approach additionally recognizes that many patients seek complementary and alternative modalities; primary care providers need to have at least basic comfort levels to guide patients in making safe and wise choices about their care.

The field of integrative medicine has been described as "healing oriented medicine that takes account of the whole person (body, mind, and spirit) including all aspects of lifestyle. It emphasizes therapeutic relationships and makes use of all appropriate therapies, both conventional and alternative."¹ Social, spiritual, behavioral, environmental, demographic, and cultural influences should always be taken into consideration when recommending lifestyle-based changes and treatment options. Recognizing external barriers, such as access issues, or internal barriers based on personal beliefs, is an important factor in the success of any therapeutic plan. In addition, a skillful integrative provider can provide the right level of advice by understanding where a patient is starting and how ready they are to change. Behavioral change in nutrition, physical activity, sleep, social relationships, exercise, and stress management often needs to be done in a stepwise fashion, with regular visits promoting long-term changes that will impact disease outcomes.^{2,3} Unfortunately, conventional medical training does not adequately prepare physicians to counsel patients in these lifestyle behaviors. Studies have found that physicians held negative views regarding their ability to manage weight in primary care and cited a lack of time during routine primary care appointments, lack of reimbursement, and lack of knowledge and resources as barriers to this vehicle of weight management.^{4,5} Fortunately, there is a growing number of high-quality continuing education resources as well as a network of health coaches, nutritionists, and integrative health professionals, available to work as a team to support patients in behavior change.

Integrative medicine has been criticized for promoting therapies unsupported by science.⁶ Indeed, research on approaches, such as acupuncture, herbal supplements, and whole healing traditions, presents unique challenges and is not always best suited to a double-blind placebo controlled trial. Fortunately, a growing number of academic institutions have integrative medicine research departments. The biennial International Congress for Integrative Medicine and Health has blossomed since the inaugural meeting in 2004, attracting up to 1000 attendees worldwide. In those areas of integrative medicine where definitive evidence is lacking, the primary care provider should take into account the relative risks versus potential benefits, using available information and reliable resources as detailed in this journal.

THE ROLE OF INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE IN PRIMARY CARE

Integrative medicine encourages the collaboration of health and healing into the larger medical model and focuses on the least invasive methods to bring about change. Patients need effective prevention strategies to cope with the environmental influences that make achieving health a challenge. Empowering patients to learn how to take care of themselves, in order to be an active participant in the healing process, is a fundamental aspect of this approach. Although there are significant barriers to primary care professionals engaging in discussions about lifestyle change and complementary

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/5682972>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/5682972>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)