

The urgent needs for communication with patients about the use of complementary and alternative medicine

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, the growing popularity of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) has been mirrored by an increasing volume of medical and scientific information published on this subject, as well as an expanding interest in and use of CAM across different populations. It be evidenced by an increase in its use from an estimated 25% in the 1970s and 1980s, more than 32% in the 1990s, and even higher to 40% and 49% in 2000s (1).

The natural products such as herbs (also known as botanicals), vitamins and minerals, and probiotics are the most popular complementary health approaches worldwide (2). In America, the dietary supplement market increased by 7.5% in 2012 compared with the previous year, reaching \$32.5 billion in sales (3). This phenomenon was also discovered in Taiwan that community-based epidemiological surveys showed health supplement products increased in use between 2007 and 2011 (12.8% vs. 16.0% respectively) (4). However, patients tend to merge CAM with conventional medicine as self-care strategy without disclosing their usages to healthcare professionals, which drawn attention to a direct health risk association with CAM use and can easily result in the mismanagement of medical care (5).

Communication about CAM use between patients and conventional healthcare professionals is the key to ensure the safe implementation of integrated use of all health care approaches. However, conventional healthcare professionals' knowledge about evidence-based practice of CAM and awareness of CAM resources are deficient which may result in the major perceived barriers to effective communication of CAM. In addition, more than half (55%) of healthcare professionals stated they had no systematic approach of accessible and relevant evidence-based guidance to discuss such issues (6).

Chang & Chang systemically 15 studies and found that 77.4% of nurses did not possess a comprehensive understanding of CAM and its associated risks and benefits feeling of uncomfortable communication with their patients regarding CAM use (7). In the absence of knowledge on CAM, available resource support and negative attitudes toward communication of CAM, nurses may struggle with successfully assessing patients regarding their safe use of CAM and provide evidence-informed decisions. As indicated by Hall et al., nurses receiving an additional CAM training are more confident in communication with patients regarding CAM use and their

colleagues' attitudes toward CAM has also influenced nurses' motivation to communicate CAM strongly (7). Therefore, clinical practice guidelines for evidence-based CAM practice in the management of diabetes consist of the benefit-risk assessment, quality control and outcome evaluation which are needed to be developed for nurses and all conventional healthcare professionals (8,9).

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