Chapter 11

Herbal and Alternative Therapies

Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM)

- Considered outside mainstream health care

Major Characteristics of CAM

- Treat each person as individual
- Consider health care of whole person
- Emphasize integration of mind and body
- Promote disease prevention, self-care, self-healing
- Recognize role of spirituality

Research

- Effectiveness
- Lack of effectiveness

CAM Healing Methods

- Biologically based therapies
  - Herbal therapies, nutritional supplements, special diets
- Alternate health-care systems
  - Naturopathy, homeopathy, chiropractic
  - Native American medicine (sweat lodges, medicine wheels)
  - Chinese traditional medicine (acupuncture, Chinese herbals)

CAM Healing Methods (continued)

- Manual healing
  - Massage, pressure-point therapies, hand-mediated biofield therapies
- Mind-body interventions
  - Yoga, meditation, hypnotherapy
  - Guided imagery, biofeedback
  - Movement-oriented therapies (music and dance)
**CAM Healing Methods (continued)**

- Spiritual
  - Shamans, faith, prayer
- Other therapies
- Bioelectromagnetics, detoxifying therapies
- Animal-assisted therapy

**Popularity of CAM**

- Reduced need for medications
  - Leads to reduced side effects, better compliance

**Dietary and Herbal Supplements**

- Availability of products
- Marketing and increased awareness
- Natural alternatives
- Preventive medicine

**Aging Population**

- Pain
- Arthritis
- Hormone-replacement therapy
- Prostate difficulty

**High Cost of Prescription Medications**

- Leads clients to seek CAM therapies

**Herbs**

- Also called botanicals
- Plant products with useful purposes
- Used as food enhancers or medications
Examples of Herbal Supplements

- Garlic
- Soy
- St.-John’s-wort
- Cranberry
- Ginseng
- Bilberry

Active Ingredient(s) in Herbs

- Found in all or part of the plant

Solid Formulations of Herbs

- Pills
- Tablets
- Capsules
- Salves
- Ointments

Liquid Formulations of Herbs

- Tea
- Infusion
- Decoction
- Tincture
- Extract

Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act of 1994 (DSHEA)

- Regulatory act for dietary supplements
- Less rigid than the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FDA)
- Exempts dietary supplements from FDA standards

Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act

Definition of Dietary Supplements

- Diet enhancers or supplements
- Herbs
- Vitamins
- Minerals
- Metabolites
DSHEA Weaknesses

- No testing prior to marketing
- Manufacturer not required to prove efficacy or safety
- Labels not monitored for accuracy in product amounts or claims of benefits of product

“Natural” Does Not Always Mean Safer

- Some active chemicals are the same as in prescription and OTC medications

Allergic Reactions

- Contain several chemicals
- Safer to begin with smaller doses

Specialty Supplements

- Occur naturally in the body
- Excessive amounts may have harmful effects
- Example—chondroitin and glucosamine

Avoid Being Judgmental

- Understand goal of client’s therapy

Seek Latest Medical Information on CAM

- Keep current with updated information
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Educate Clients</strong></th>
<th><strong>Avoid False Hope of Cure</strong></th>
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| • Strengths and weaknesses of CAM  
• Encourage clients to seek information from reputable sources | • Ensure clients’ understanding of uses and limitations of CAM |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Client Health History</strong></th>
<th><strong>Common Drug-Herbal Interactions</strong></th>
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</table>
| • Aids in avoiding adverse reactions  
• Aids in identifying drug interactions | • Obtain client’s health history to prevent drug-herbal interactions |

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Echinacea</strong></th>
<th><strong>Interactions with Feverfew, Ginger, Ginkgo, and Garlic</strong></th>
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</thead>
</table>
| • Interacts with amiodarone and anabolic steroids  
• Results in possible increased hepatotoxicity | • Aspirin  
• Heparin  
• NSAIDs  
• Warfarin  
• Results in possible increased bleeding potential |
Interactions with Garlic and Ginseng

- Insulin
- Oral hypoglycemic agents
- Results in increased hypoglycemic effects

Interaction with Ginkgo

- Anticonvulsants—decreased effectiveness
- Tricyclic antidepressants—decreased seizure threshold

Interactions with CNS Depressants

- St. John’s wort
- Ginseng
- Valerian
- Kava kava
- Results in increased sedative effect

Active Chemicals in Herbs

- Work synergistically

Strength of Herbal Preparations Depends Upon

- Where it was grown
- Collection and storage

Markers for Standardization

- Single vs. several active ingredients
- Further research needed