

Does alternative
medicine really work?



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- Eduardo Gomez
- Mr. Thomas Corbet

Alternative medicine range from herbal remedies to acupuncture and were typically used by people who are unable to use conventional medicine.

However, today many people use alternative medicine because they fear big pharmaceutical drugs or cannot afford the rising cost of healthcare. People claim that alternative medicines work and heal them of illnesses but do alternative medicines really work when compared to conventional medicine?

In a recent study, it was found that about 40 percent of United States adults use some of the following forms of alternative, medicine mind-body interventions, biologically based therapies, body-based methods, or energy methods. These methods of medicine became appealing to adults during the early or mid 19th century as they were marketed as “ safe” and natural” methods. During this time alternative medicine actually competed with conventional medicine. However towards the end of the 19th century, alternative medicines were denounced as medical breakthroughs helped doctors understand the human body better. In today’s society, alternative medicines have again gained popularity for two reasons, one is when they are marketed as “ safe” because of the fear of vaccinations or super bugs that have developed because of some conventional practices(Ventola). Another reason is the gap between physicians and people today. In the United States, the cost of health care is incredibly high so many Americans resort to alternatives that are cheaper. Americans also have access to the internet, which allows people to spread false information about conventional medicine. For example, many people believe that vaccinations and

antibiotics have links to cancer and therefore use alternative medicine instead of conventional methods.

Alternative medicines range from an array of practices. Mind-body interventions include therapies such as hypnosis, meditation, yoga, biofeedback, and tai chi. According to a 2002 survey, 62% of adults in the United States use mind-body interventions. However, this practice is often only used on people with low physical and emotional risk whose condition is implemented by stress (Wahbeh). Therefore for physical conditions rather than emotional conditions, mind-body interventions loses to conventional medicine. Biologically based therapies include the consumption of herbs, foods, dietary supplements, and natural products (Ventola). The ideas behind the practice is to consume products that are rich in vitamins and minerals to help your body. Although over the years, many trials have been done on these therapies but only few have proven to be 100% effective. Some products such as herbal teas or cartilage of sharks are helpful by providing the body vitamins or minerals that you might be lacking. Thus, this type of alternative medicine could prove to beneficial over time. However for more immediate care to a health issue, conventional medicine would be more useful. Body-based methods which include massages, chiropractic, and osteopathic manipulation are proven to be as affected as conventional medicine. This practice focuses on allowing the body to heal itself by using force and massage therapies on bones, joints, and tissues. Patients of chiropractors and massage therapist have been completely satisfied when they are dealing with back pain or other issues. The problems with this practice is that many schools do not teach manual therapies for specific

conditions and there lacks state of the art equipment for specific treatment (Rosenheck). Body-based therapies are very useful to patients around the world and sometimes are better than conventional medicines. Energy methods is most likely the alternative medicine that people find most skeptical. The method includes Reiki, therapeutic touch and electromagnetic field exposure. Each of the therapies deals with a person either touching you or waving their hands over you body. The science behind the specific method of trying to heal someone body is questionable, however the therapies causes you to relax. Therefore the therapies may prove to be effective since relaxation can fix many health issues such as health disease. These practices of alternative methods are sometimes questionable but do prove to cause relaxation which is extremely beneficial to health issues.

The effectiveness of alternative medicine is debatable. Many of its methods lack the science behind it when compared to conventional medicine.

Therefore some people find it easier to use and believe in conventional medicine. The main reason behind the success of alternative medicine is the ability for a person to relax. Each method is easy to take part in and often involves the person being stationary. For example, some conventional methods are time consuming and difficult as alternative methods are usually easy and quick. Alternative medicine allows the person to relax which is extremely beneficial to the human body. However, in order to compare the effectiveness of alternative and conventional medicine in a person, we must look at that person's state of mind and their condition. If a person believes they can be cured using therapeutic touch then they will most likely be cured but if a person believes in doctors than any medication they are prescribed

will most likely heal them. Hospital settings may also interfere with a person's ability to heal properly and therefore alternative medicines that can be done at home are often times better for the person. The patient's desire to be healed and their beliefs play a crucial role when determining the effectiveness of each practice. The condition of the patient also plays a role because some conditions may require immediate attention which can only really be proved by conventional medicine. Serious conditions are better handled when using conventional practices when compared to alternative practices. The decisions ultimately comes down to the patient and how they want to be treated.

Personally, I use and believe in both conventional and alternative medicines. I seek alternative medicines when they are appropriate because of the fear of superbugs or the side effects of conventional medicine. However, conventional medicine is also extremely useful and better suited for serious health issues. Therefore, people should take into account the situation, chose alternative or conventional medicine for what is better suited for them and be the own judge of the medicines effectiveness.

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