

# Alternative Medicine used in Hospital

Anand Yadav<sup>1</sup>; Dr. Swarup J. Chattarjee<sup>2</sup>; Anjali Gupta<sup>3</sup>  
S.N. College of Pharmacy Jaunpur

**Abstract:-** Alternative medicine encompasses a broad range of healthcare practices and therapies that are used either in place of or alongside conventional medical treatments. In hospital settings, the integration of alternative medicine is increasingly recognized as part of an integrative approach to patient care, aiming to address not only physical symptoms but also emotional, psychological, and spiritual well-being. The common therapies include acupuncture, herbal medicine, chiropractic care, massage therapy, homeopathy, and practices dealing with energy healing, including Reiki. Incorporation of these therapies in hospitals can enhance patient outcomes, encouraging relaxation, pain relief, chronic condition management, quality of life enhancement, or the body's natural healing process. Although alternative medicine can provide significant benefits, its application in clinical settings requires careful consideration of its safety, efficacy, and potential interactions with conventional treatments. This abstract explores the role of alternative medicine in hospital environments, highlighting the growing trend of integrative care models and the potential for a holistic approach to healing within modern healthcare systems.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Alternative medicine refers to a wide range of healthcare practices, therapies, and treatments that are used instead of conventional medical treatment. In hospitals, alternative medicine is usually employed in combination with (complementary) or as a replacement for (alternative) traditional medical practices, especially when patients want a more holistic approach to health. Some of the most common alternative therapies are acupuncture, herbal medicine, homeopathy, chiropractic care, and energy therapies such as Reiki.

Other branches of alternative medicine in hospitals are incorporated to help patients recover better, decrease stress, treat pains, or generally improve one's well-being. Integrative medicine settings are the usual places where mainstream and alternative medicine are given together as one specific, more complete treatment. Alternative medicine is beneficial, but medical advice first must be sought out from medical professionals to avoid conflicting with the standard treatments sometimes.

## II. LITERATURE SURVEY

Also known as complementary or integrative medicine, alternative medicine includes all kinds of healthcare practices, treatment, and therapies considered outside the conventional domain of Western medicine. Often,

alternative medicine puts greater emphasis on preventive measures and holistic care, as well as on the health-giving properties of the body. How alternative medicine is integrated into hospitals varies from institution to institution, along with their philosophy, the needs of the patients, and the acceptance of these practices in the region. Here is an in-depth talk on the types of alternative medicine used in hospitals, their applications, and the benefits and challenges associated with their incorporation into mainstream practice:

### A. Types of Alternative Medicine Used in Hospitals

#### ➤ Acupuncture:

- What it is: Acupuncture is the traditional Chinese medical procedure that entails the insertion of thin needles into various body points to restore balance of energy flow, or what is commonly referred to as Qi and ease up many different symptoms.
- Hospital Use: Acupuncture is a common practice for the management of pain especially from chronic sources such as osteoarthritis and migraines, back pain, and post operative cases. It is also used as an antiemetic to prevent nausea and vomiting during chemotherapy sessions.
- Benefits: Acupuncture has proven itself to alleviate pain and improve the lives of cancer patients. It is also applied to assist addicted patients with trying to quit smoking.

#### ➤ Chiropractic Care:

- What is it: Chiropractic care is a form of treatment where the patient experiences spinal manipulation and other hands-on techniques that focus primarily on musculoskeletal and joint problems, especially the back, neck, and headaches.
- Hospital Use: Hospitals employing departments of integrative medicine may include chiropractors as part of a multidisciplinary approach in treating pain conditions, especially chronic pain patients, musculoskeletal injuries, and post-surgical care.
- Benefits: Chiropractic treatments have an established efficacy in preventing the recurrence of back pain, enhancing mobility, and alternative pain medication to opioids, which is one of the contributors to the opioid crisis.

➤ *Massage Therapy:*

- What it is: Massage therapy involves the manipulation of muscles and soft tissues to relieve tension, improve circulation, and promote relaxation.
- Hospital Use: Massage therapy is commonly integrated into hospital care for patients recovering from surgery, those with chronic pain, or cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy.
- Benefits: Evidence-based support for massage therapy to alleviate anxiety, improve mood, reduce pain, and enhance quality of life.

➤ *Herbal Medicine:*

- What it is: It is the use of plant-based substances used in treating many types of health conditions. This includes not only teas, but also tinctures and capsules that come from medicinal herbs.
- Hospital Use: Some hospitals, especially those promoting integrative or holistic care practice, use herbal supplements to supplement traditional therapies, such as enhancing the immune system, treating sleep disorders.
- Advantages: Herbs like ginger, turmeric, ginseng have been studied for anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and immune-boosting properties. They are to be prescribed in conjunction with standard treatment for arthritis, digestive disorders and fatigue conditions.

➤ *Aromatherapy:*

- What it is: Aromatherapy involves the use of essential oils derived from plants for therapeutic purposes, typically through inhalation or topical application.
- Hospital Use: Aromatherapy is commonly used in hospitals to reduce stress, anxiety, and improve sleep in patients undergoing surgery or those with terminal illnesses.
- Benefits: Research indicated that aromatherapy can be used to reduce pain, discomfort, and anxieties while allowing patients to relax, especially in the ICU or for a patient receiving palliative care.

➤ *Meditation and Mindfulness:*

- What is it: Meditation involves practices to attain focused attention with relaxation. In mindfulness meditation, it teaches individuals to pay attention to the present moment. It may also include deep breathing techniques.
- Hospital Use: Some hospitals with integrative medicine centers or programs provide guided meditation or mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) to help patients manage stress, pain, or anxiety.
- Benefits: Meditation and mindfulness are widely practiced to alleviate stress, improve mood, and assist patients with chronic pain, cancer, and mental health issues, such as depression.

➤ *Nutritional Therapy:*

- What it is: Nutritional therapy is the use of dietetic interventions and nutritional supplements to prevent or treat a broad range of health conditions.
- Use in Hospitals: Nutritional therapy can be provided at hospitals, especially to chronic care patients suffering from diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, or cancer among others.
- Benefits include recovery, strengthened immunity, and general health enhancement, especially in patients who have received chemotherapy treatment or have been postoperative.

*B. Advantages of Implementing Alternative Therapies in Hospitals*➤ *Holistic Approach:*

Integrating alternative medical therapy allows the hospital to offer patients a more holistic approach to their care and concerns while attending to physical health, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being.

➤ *Pain Management:*

Alternative therapies include acupuncture, chiropractic care, and massage which reduce reliance on prescription painkillers, thus decreases the risk of addiction to that type of medication with any side effects from long-term use.

➤ *Enhanced Patient Satisfaction:*

Patients who undergo standard medical treatments combined with alternative therapies feel that their treatment plans are satisfactory. Many believe that having alternative treatments as part of their treatment program gives them a more holistic approach to healing.

➤ *Rapid Recovery and Quality of Life:*

Integrative medicine practices help to improve speed recovery times, reduce stress, and improve quality of life in patients, especially those with chronic conditions, cancer patients, or post-operative rehabilitation.

➤ *Mental Health Benefits:*

Techniques such as meditation, aromatherapy, and acupuncture can help to curb anxiety, depression, and stress issues, leading to improved mental resilience, thus better mental health care.

*C. Challenges of an Alternative Medicine Integration Hospital*➤ *Lack of Standardization and Regulation:*

There exist numerous alternative therapies in hospitals lacking standardized protocol and evidence-based guidelines to which many alternative therapies are not bound, making it challenging to set adequate criteria to measure their effectiveness, thereby affecting patient safety.

➤ *Evidence and Research Gap*

There is an increasing number of studies about the benefits associated with alternative therapies; however,

many practices still have limited scientific evidence. Some have mixed findings. Those without solid scientific bases are usually avoided by hospitals.

➤ *Interdisciplinary Coordination:*

Combining alternative and allopathic medicine necessitates an interaction of physicians from diverse disciplines. This can sometimes cause practical problems or resistance from doctors who might not be familiar or trained in alternative treatments.

➤ *Patient Safety Issues*

Alternative therapies, especially herbal supplements and uncontrolled treatments, can cause significant side effects when there is an adverse interaction with prescribed medications or other treatments. Accordingly, hospital staff should assess the safety and combination of conventional and alternative treatments.

➤ *Cultural and Institutional Barriers:*

Some hospitals, even some more conservative ones, shall refute the introduction of alternative medicine due to cultural or institutional beliefs about its effectiveness. The patient will further face skepticism on the part of health care providers who favor evidence-based treatments.

*D. Examples of Hospitals with Integrative Medicine Programs*

- Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (New York): In addition to cancer treatment, this hospital can provide patients with complementary therapies, such as acupuncture, massage, meditation, and nutritional counseling.
- Cleveland Clinic (Ohio): The Cleveland Clinic has a Center for Integrative Medicine that offers, among others, acupuncture, massage therapy, and nutrition counseling complementary to the conventional medical treatments.
- Mayo Clinic, Minnesota: The Integrative Medicine program at Mayo Clinic encompasses therapies like acupuncture, chiropractic manipulation, and guided imagery. These have been found to be complementary therapies to standard medical practices for a variety of conditions.

### III. CONCLUSION

The use of alternative medicine in hospitals indicates a step forward in more comprehensive, patient-centered care. There are many benefits to the inclusion of these therapies-particularly with regards to pain control, stress reduction, and improving patient satisfaction-but challenges include a call for more research, standardization, and tight management of safety concerns. Going forward, it will be of paramount importance that hospitals practicing integrative medicine develop critical communication bridges between traditional and alternative health care providers while using approaches founded on evidence to ensure that patients receive safe, effective, and comprehensive care.

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