



The Patterns Use and Attitudes toward Unconventional Medicine among Saudi Young Adults: Cross Sectional Study

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Abstract: Unconventional medicines (UM) are widely used in the Qassim Province. This study to investigate patterns of use and attitudes toward unconventional medicine among young adult enrolled at school of medicine in Qassim University.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional survey was conducted using adopted questionnaire on a sample of 313 young adults enrolling at the college of medicine.

Result: The response rate was 55.9%. Using of UM was mentioned by 69.1% of respondents. The most of the respondents 72.4% indicated that reasons of use UM was treating illness. The most common UM were thought to be holly Quran & pray, herbal medicine and honey by most of respondents 76.3%, 70.3% and 65.3% respectively, followed by sports therapy 44.9%, oil therapy 23.7%, nutrition medicine 24.6%, fasting therapy 13.6%, traditional medicine 13.6%, Quipping 7.6%, aromatherapy 6.8%, apiotherapy 4.2% and Yoga therapy 5.1%. The most common reasons preference of natural substance for treatment were 47%, success of UT 42% and long waiting for an appointment with specialist or consultant.

Conclusions: Many people consider using different modalities of UM for treatment of illness and wellbeing. Providers caring for young adults should discuss UM with patients, particularly those recognized as likely use UM.

Keywords: Unconventional Therapy, Unconventional Medicine, Questionnaires

1. INTRODUCTION

Therapies or examinations which has no scientific basis and demonstrates no effective or diagnostic reliability is referred to unconventional medicine (UM) ^[1]. Various terms are used interchangeably with UM, although different things may be meant UM; include alternative medicine, complementary medicine, holistic medicine, integrative medicine, and naturopathy. UM can be considered as a group of varied medical and health care systems, practices, and products that are not generally considered part of conventional medicine ^[2]. The conventional medicine or allopathy is scientific medicine.

UM comprises many treatment modalities, including acupuncture, aromatherapy, homeotherapy, chiropractic, dietetics, herbalism, megavitamins, yoga, and spiritual healing.

Unconventional therapies are more widespread than ever before ^[3]. Illness is one of the common reasons to use UM. The most common illnesses include cancer, arthritis, chronic back pain, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, and gastrointestinal problems ^[1]. In Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), cancer, skin, asthma disease, depression, neurological disorders and chronic pain are common of diseases lead to increase in UM use ^[4,5,6,7,8]. The use of UM in health care is rapidly growing ^[2]. Previous study

in KSA showed that 42% of population used UM for their child's condition^[6]. A recent study in KAS that investigates UM use among the military and their families of Saudi reported that 46% used UM^[5]. A recent study that investigates UM use among the neurology patients at King Saud University Ambulatory Clinic reported 67% used UM^[7]. Another study in KAS that investigates UM use among the patients attending health clinic centers reported that 36.9% used UM^[9]. The most commonly used UM practices were Cupping (hojamah), herbs, cauterization, honey, and the reciting of the Holy Quran, religious and spiritual healing^[5,6,7].

However many studies were reported on population used UM in KSA, but for Saudi young adult was not found up to knowledge of the authors. Since the Saudi young adults represent a proximally 50% in Qassim Provenance as well as other region in KSA^[10]. So this study can be serve as a pilot study to make attention of Saudi medical providers on the needs to introduce UM into the health care system. This study to investigate patterns of use and attitudes toward unconventional medicine among young adult enrolled at school of medicine in Qassim University

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study population consisted of first year medical college, Qassim university who, at the time of the study (2015—2016). After giving written informed consent, participants completed a self-administered questionnaire. The study population group was selected due to lack of knowledge of medical prescriptions, and lack of knowledge of varieties of drug therapy. The questionnaire was designed to be completed in five to ten minutes.

The three-page instrument consisted of sixteen questions with a check-box format. The questionnaire has been divided in to three parts. Part A: information about the student which include age, gender, marital status and health status. Part B: information about unconventional therapies and providers that the students used. Part C: information about beliefs towards (unconventional therapies) use^[11].

3. DATA ANALYSIS

Responses to each survey item on the UM questionnaire were graphed and the frequencies were examined. Following descriptive analysis, the data were examined for internal consistency by exploring item-total correlations. Frequencies were used to describe respondent background characteristics.

4. RESULTS

Of the total 313 questionnaires distributed to all medical students at Qassim University present during the study period, i.e. 1 June 2012–31 July 2012, 175 medical students were returned giving a response rate of 55.91%. The majority of the respondents were male (n= 100, 57.1%). Aged between 15 to 20 years (n= 135, 77.1%) and between 21 to 25 years (n= 40, 22.9%). Among the respondents, 100 (57.1%) were males and 75 (42.9%) were females.

In Table 1: 69.1% of respondents mention that use unconventional therapy in their life. The respondents indicate that 73.6% of the unconventional therapy practitioners who visited by respondents do not holding certificate or license and only 5.8% only holding certificate or license. The most of the respondents indicate that reasons of use unconventional medicine was treating illness 72.4%, 38.8% of respondents for promoting and the other 25.9% indicate for preventing illness. The most of respondents 93.1% shown that get their information about UM from family members and/or friend. Some respondents get their UM information from internet 24.1%, advertising 8.6% and 9.5% from book. The most common reasons preference of natural substance for treatment 47%, success of UT 42% and long waiting for an appointment with specialist or consultant. The most common UM were preferred by respondents included holly Quran/Roqua/ pray 76.3%, herbal medicine 70.3% and honey 65.3%, followed by sports therapy 44.9%, oil therapy 34.7%, nutrition medicine 24.6%, massage therapy 23.7% fasting therapy 13.6%, traditional medicine 13.6%, Quipping 7.6%, aromatherapy 6.8%, apiotherapy 4.2% and Yoga therapy 5.1% (Table 2).

Table1. Questions on UM and responses.

	Questions	Responses	N	%
(6)	Did you ever use unconventional therapy in your life?	yes	121	69.1
		no	54	30.9
		Total	175	100.0
	Is a person holding a certificate or license	Yes	7	5.8
		No	89	73.6
		I don't Know	20	16.5
		Total	116	95.9
		Missing system	5	4.1
	Source of information for use UM	Book	11	9.5
		Advertising	10	8.6
		Internet	28	24.1
		Family member/friends	108	93.1
	Reasons for use UM	Preventing illness	30	25.9
		Treating illness	84	72.4
		Promoting health	45	38.8
		Other	2	1.7

Table2. Types of unconventional medicine used by young adults.

	Type of UM	N	%
1	Quran, Roqua, Salah	90	76.3
2	Herbal medicine	83	70.3
3	Honey	77	65.3
4	Sports therapy	53	44.9
5	Oil therapy	41	34.7
6	Nutrition medicine	29	24.6
7	Massage Therapy	28	23.7
8	Fasting therapy	16	13.6
9	Traditional medicine	16	13.6
10	Cupping	9	7.6
11	Aromatherapy	8	6.8
12	Yoga therapy	6	5.1
13	Apiotherapy	5	4.2
14	Cauterization	5	4.2
15	Alternative medicinal urine & milk therapy	4	3.4
16	Osteopathy	3	2.5
17	Reflexology	2	1.7
18	Magnet therapy	2	1.7
19	Acupuncture	1	0.8
20	Electromengenatic therapy	1	0.8
21	Traditional Chinese therapy	1	0.8
22	Other	1	0.8

Respondents showed a positive attitudes toward unconventional medicine that 41 (23.4%) agreed and strong agree 8 (4.6%) about unconventional medicine providers give good information on maintaining a healthy lifestyle. The respondents believed 82 (46.8%), 77 (44%) and 46 (26.3) that there are less side effects when taking natural remedies, unconventional medicine

involves natural plant formulas which are more healthy than taking drugs given by the medical doctor and unconventional medicine builds up the body's own defenses and promotes self-healing. The respondents strongly disagree and disagree 90 51.4 that they would be more likely to use unconventional medicine if there were more unconventional medicine clinics. the respondents 55 (31.5%) agree that the more knowledge a young adult has about Unconventional medicine, the more likely he/she is to use it. The most of respondents 143 (81.7%) agree that parent(s) and family can influence a young adult's unconventional medicine use by exposing them to it. 93 (53.1%) and 94 (53.7) agree that they are more likely to use unconventional medicine if their friends are using it and if coaches and teachers discuss it with them (Table 3).

Table3. Young adults' attitudes toward unconventional medicine.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Haven't decided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	Unconventional medicine providers give good information on maintaining a healthy lifestyle	26 (14.9)	46 (26.3)	54 (30.9)	41 (23.4)	8 (4.6)
2	There are less side effects when taking natural remedies	14 (8.0)	30 (17.1)	49 (28.0)	65 (37.1)	17 (9.7)
3	Unconventional medicine involves natural plant formulas which are more healthy than taking drugs given by the medical doctor	15 (8.6)	23 (13.1)	60 (34.3)	65 (37.1)	12 (6.9)
4	Young adults would be more likely to use	30 (17.1)	60 (34.3)	54 (30.9)	26 (14.9)	5 (2.9)

	Unconventional medicine if there were more Unconventional medicine clinics					
5	Young adults believe that unconventional medicine builds up the body's own defenses and promotes self-healing	21 (12.0)	49 (28.0)	59 (33.7)	39 (22.3)	7 (4.0)
6	The more knowledge a young adult has about unconventional medicine, the more likely he/she is to use it	10 (5.7)	48 (27.4)	62 (35.4)	47 (26.9)	8 (4.6)
6	Parent(s) and family can influence a young adult's unconventional medicine use by exposing them to it	7 (4.0)	8 (4.6)	17 (9.7)	87 (49.7)	56 (32.0)
7	Young adults are more likely to use unconventional medicine if their friends are using it	13 (7.4)	23 (13.1)	46 (26.3)	77 (44.0)	16 (9.1)
8	Young adults are more likely to use unconventional	11 (6.3)	21 (12.0)	49 (28.0)	74 (42.3)	20 (11.4)

medicine if coaches and teachers discuss it with them					
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5. DISCUSSION

The objective of this study was to investigate patterns of use and attitudes toward unconventional medicine among young adult enrolled at school of medicine in Qassim University. Most the young adult participants 69.1% showed that use unconventional medicine in their life. Similar to previous studies [12, 13] indicted that 71% and 80% of young adult using UM. In our study indicated that Quran/Roqua/pray, herbal medicine, honey therapy and sports therapy are common type of UM used by the young adults which similar to previous study include young adults and adults in Qassim Province [10]. These type of UM are part of "Prophetic medicine" which prevalent in KSA [10]. Herbal medicine among the common UM used worldwide according World Health Organization's Global Atlas of Traditional, Complementary, and Alternative Medicine and other studies [10,14,15]. The herbal medicine, acupuncture and massage therapy are most commonly in young adult and adults in US [16,17]. In UK, massage, aromatherapy, herbal medicine and acupuncture were the most commonly used [18]. The differences on types of UM used by young adults in different countries due to the young adults can influence by several factors included individual and social and culture influencing factors [19]. In this study, the used of UM by young adults influence by peoples, internet more than by book and advertising. This study similar to previous studies that young adults can be affected by people [10,19]. The most common reason of using UM is treating illness which similar to other studies [10,12,13,19]. In this study showed similar previous studies [20] the young adult showed positive attitude about UM. Conclusions, Many young adult used and would consider using different modalities of UM for treatment of illness and wellbeing. UM commonly was utilized in the Qassim province mainly related to Islamic Medicine which included Quran/prayer,

herbal medicine and honey therapy. Providers caring for young adults should discuss UM with patients, particularly those recognized as likely use UM. Further studies should investigate UM are taken along with conventional therapies.

LIMITATIONS

The limitations of our study like survey based study, a convenient sample of respondents from first year college of medicine so the outcome of the study cannot generalized. Some of the participants may have been inaccurate. The outcome of the study was relied on self-reports by young adults and could not independently verify the information that was reported. The data were collected from one province, findings may differ in other geographically groups of young adult.

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