

REVIEW ARTICLE

COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE: WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR?

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Today the plant based medicines are being used globally as home remedies and offering a broad spectrum of activity since ancient times. In the contemporary times, we all know that chemical medications for therapeutic cures have become more and more available in the market. In fact, the pharmaceutical business is regarded as one of the most booming industries in the world, with a high growth capability year on year. Against this, we have also overheard about the herbal remedies used as medications, as suggested by the elders in the family for a variety of common ailments. Present article reports that the huge acceptance and popularity that the modern complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) has gained currently; is originally the rebirth of old health care system and can be explored by expanding the frontiers of the ancient medicine system.

Key words: Complementary medicine, Alternative medicine, Ancient health care system, Health benefit.

INTRODUCTION

The usage of herbs to treat a variety of different ailments is universal, and exists in every human culture on Earth. Despite this, the largest use of medical herbs still occurs in societies which are not fully industrialized. Because of the high costs involved with manufacturing modern medicines, many people living in developing nations simply do not have the financial resources to pay for them, and as a result, they are forced to use natural herbs as an affordable alternative. In recent years, many people living in industrialized countries have begun taking a second look at herbal medicines due to the rising cost of medicine and healthcare in their own nations. There are a number of herbal systems that dominate the world today, and these systems are Chinese herbs, Ayurvedic medicine, Roman and Greek herbs, and Shamanic herbs (Figure 1). Many of the pharmaceuticals which are currently used can be traced back to herbal remedies which were developed many centuries ago. The WHO has indicated that as many as



Fig. 1. Herbs and herbal products used as CAM

80% of all people living in the world make use of herbal medicine as their main source of healthcare. Because half the world's population (roughly 3 billion people), live on less than \$2 per day, it is next to impossible for them to buy even basic medicines. Even in the developed nation such as United States, the alternative health industry has exploded within recent years, and an intense global search is being made