

A Model of Integrative Medicine for Health Care in Contemporary Society

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ABSTRACT

This article on models of integrative medicine (IM) for health care in contemporary society aims to address the various factors that could contribute more effectively to address goal # 3 (“Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”) of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda.

Keywords: Transdisciplinary in Health Care; The goal # 3 of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda; Methods of diagnosis and treatment in traditional and conventional medicine; A model of integrative medicine (IM)

Abbreviations: IM: Integrative Medicine; SDG: Sustainable Development Goals; UN: United Nations; NCCIH: National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health; NHS: National Health System

Short Communication

Transdisciplinary in health care aims to cure the patient in an integrated way, as well as maximize the human and financial resources needed for medical practice. In this sense, some research on models on IM for health care [1] has been proposed to contribute more effectively to goal #3 (“Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages”) of SDG of UN 2030 Agenda [2]. In this regard, it should be stated that the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH) argues that integrative medicine is much more than the sum of Western medicine and Eastern medicine [3] because it aims to cure the patient’s physical-mind-soul in a holistic way [4], as described in the Figure 1. The history of medicine has had various models for healing the patient over time [5]. Recently, in Western tradition through the doctors David Eisenberg, Andrew Weil followed by Helene Langevin, Paulo de Lima and, in Eastern tradition, through the physicians Ram Vishwakarma, Chen Keji, Tadashi Yano, some IM models has been developed [6]. For example, based on its ancestral holistic medical experience [7], the Indian Government [8] has launched an integrated system of traditional

medicine [9] - which include Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy (abbreviated by AYUSH) - that complements the practice of conventional medicine [10]. For its part, the Mayo Clinic Program has shown the advantages of integrating conventional medicine with traditional Indian and Chinese medicine practices [11].

Methods

In this article on models in IM for health care in contemporary society, it was chosen the 40 main books and articles that from the researcher’s point of view of this article could give the reader a global perspective on this subject, but maintaining scientific rigor on this topic.

Results and Discussion

The results and discussion of this research work on models in IM for health care in contemporary society that could be applied to goal #3 of SDG of UN2030 Agenda will be described below.

A Model of Integrative Medicine for Health Care: An Overview

The World Health Organization (WHO) [12] defines that “health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity...The health of all peoples is fundamental to the attainment of peace and security and is dependent on the fullest co-operation of individuals and States.”.

In this regard, medical treatment should focus on curing the patient’s various dimensions, namely, the physical (using the assumptions of conventional medicine), psychological (using some assumptions of traditional medicine) [13] and spiritual (using programs on quality of life). For example, the Royal London Hospital for Integrated Medicine [14] is an example of the advantages of the practice of IM for health care in contemporary society [15]. In fact, the models of IM [16] have sought a holistic approach in medical practice, where the relationship between physical and psychological health is promoted [17] to give a better quality of life for the patient [18]. Indeed, there are some studies that show the benefits of physical exercise for cognitive function, with a decrease in stress, anxiety and an increase in concentration, creativity [19]. There are also some investigations that suggest that the patient’s recovery time could be decreased by spiritual practices, as advocated by some integrative medicine models [20].

Furthermore, WHO defends that global and personal health might be connected to global peace and security because we all belong to the same “human family”, as we could see nowadays with the coronavirus pandemic (abbreviated Covid-19), in which the world balance is intertwined with the individual well-being of each

country [21]. Another advantage of the models of IM is described by the expression “Infinite needs versus finite resources” [22] that expresses a new conception in the practice of medical care, as exemplified by the Program “Choosing Wisely” [23]. This Program seeks to reduce the waste of medical practice (excessive chemical medication, unnecessary diagnostic tests), which is a crucial factor for the good financial sustainability of the National Health System (NHS) [24] due to increased life expectancy of most of the patients. Furthermore, it should be stated that the successful implementation of a model of IM for health care might require the participation of pharmaceutical and insurance companies that allow the reduction of costs to patients who want to enjoy the holistic conception of IM [25].

A Model of Integrative Medicine for Health Care: Methods of Diagnosis and Treatment

If we want to build a model in IM in an appropriate way [26], it is necessary to compare the methods of diagnosis and treatment in traditional medicine (emphasis on prevention) and conventional medicine (emphasis on cure) to choose the most effective to heal the patient in a holistic way. In this regard, it should be stated that the diagnostic methods in these two medical practices are quite different from each other. For example, the Ayurveda physician interconnects the examination of the physical body (feces, urine, pulse, tongue, voice, skin, general appearance, eyes) with the mental and emotional pattern that has led to the patient’s illness (designated by “doshas”) [27]. For its part, conventional medicine essentially uses “scientific” methods, such as, analysis (urine, blood), MRI&CTA scan, X-rays, ECG, ultrasound together with the patient’s medical history [28].

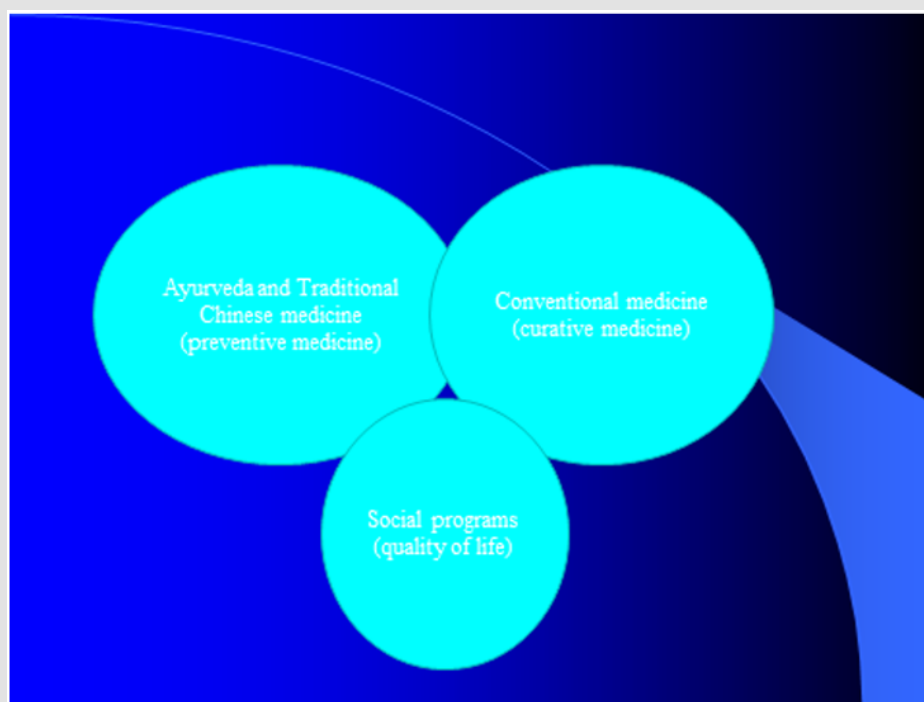


Figure 1: Scheme of a model of integrative medicine.

However, there are studies that show that some patients diagnose themselves through the internet (the “Dr. Google”), without any medical advice [29]. Furthermore, it should be noted that the methods of treatment in traditional medicine and conventional medicine are also very distinct from each other. For example, in Ayurveda, a positive and meditative mind is encouraged for the acceleration of the healing process, along with a balanced diet (reducing alcohol, tobacco and refined sugar) and the use of herbal pharmacopeia [30]. For its part, conventional medicine essentially treats the patient’s body through chemical medication, surgery, radiation [31], as well as, nanotechnologies (suitable for the destruction of diseased cells), biological engineering (suitable for the replacement of incurable human organs) and artificial intelligence (suitable for complex surgeries) [32] (Figure 1).

Conclusion

One of the main objectives to look for a new model of IM that could be successfully applied to goal #3 of SDG of UN 2030 Agenda [33] is to find a cheaper and more effective method of diagnosis and treatment for the patient and therefore be a value-based medicine (complementing evidence-based medicine) [34], as well as, providing a scientific explanation for “spontaneous” cures [35], and a philosophical perspective on “life after death” [36]. In this regard, it should be mentioned that an essential factor in the models of IM is the emphasis on the patient’s self-awareness for the success of the healing process (described in Figure 1), whereas the conventional Cartesian model of health care, it heals only the patient’s physical body, without changing the patterns that gave rise to the disease [37]. Nowadays, there are several medical universities scattered all over the world, with postgraduate studies in IM [38], where specialized knowledge on this theme is acquired [39], as well as research centers looking for new models on IM, such as the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine [40].

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