

Complementary alternative medicine use among Chinese Americans: Findings from a community mental health service population

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Abstract:

Objective: Complementary alternative medicine use among Asian Americans is widespread, yet poorly understood. This study explored its use among Chinese Americans reporting mental health symptoms.

Methods: A cross-sectional survey determined the prevalence and correlates of complementary alternative medicine use in an urban sample seen at a community mental health service.

Results: Out of 153 Chinese-American patients, 126 (82%) reported current use of complementary therapies (megavitamin therapy, 46%; herbal medicine, 43%; massage, acupuncture, and spiritual healing, about 25% each). Compared with nonusers, users were older, female, employed, less well functioning physically, and less acculturated.

Conclusions: Growing immigrant populations and increasing mental health services consumption by members of ethnic-racial groups in the United States call for more attention to complementary alternative medicine use and its potential to aid conventional medical and mental services delivery.

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