



MANIFESTO

For the European Parliament Elections 2014

Complementary and Alternative Medicine CAM - for a healthier Europe!

At a time when healthcare across the EU is facing a number of challenges EUROCAM calls on candidate MEPs for the new European Parliament to support:

- WHO's call for greater integration of CAM into healthcare systems
- better regulation of CAM products, practices and providers
- greater investment in researching CAM's risks and benefits.

One in four EU citizens uses CAM in one form or another as part of their healthcare, whether as a complement to, or an alternative to conventional care. Yet, the increasingly high level of popular use is not reflected in EU or national health policy or provision.

Five key areas in which CAM can make a substantial contribution:

- healthy ageing – healthy workforce
- patient quality of life
- reducing healthcare costs
- reducing antimicrobial resistance
- sustaining the EU health workforce



EUROCAM is the EU stakeholder platform representing the views and interests of European umbrella organisations of patients who use, and doctors and practitioners who practise, various disciplines of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) in Europe.

The most common CAM modalities are acupuncture, ayurvedic, anthroposophic, herbal, homeopathic and traditional Chinese and Tibetan medicine, and body/energy modalities such as chiropractic, kinesiology, massage, osteopathy, reflexology and shiatsu.

Healthy ageing - healthy workforce

EU Citizens are living longer and having to work for more years to pay for their support in later life. CAM can play an important role in helping citizens achieve optimum health in later life. Surveys show that in early middle age increasing numbers of citizens regularly use CAM as they become aware of the need to stay healthy and prevent the onset of chronic diseases associated with ageing such as arthritis and circulatory disorders. They seek to take care of their health in a positive way developing the ability to make sound health decisions and lifestyle changes and taking responsibility for their health. In this they are frequently aided and supported by CAM products and practices that they integrate into their healthcare. Unfortunately, because most CAM is currently unavailable through healthcare systems it is only those who can afford it that can access it. To help enable the maintenance of health through a longer working life and into old age serious consideration must be given to WHO's recommendation to integrate CAM into the healthcare systems of Member States.*

[* Ref.: WHO Traditional Medicine Strategy 2014–2023]



Patient quality of life

One in four EU citizens uses CAM in one form or another as part of their healthcare, whether as a complement to, or an alternative to conventional care. Citizens use CAM because they perceive and experience this form of treatment to be holistic and empowering and less likely to cause adverse reactions than conventional medicine. One area in which there is a high percentage of CAM use is by patients with cancer. There is a growing body of evidence to show that mindfulness based stress reduction help patients deal with the stress of cancer and its associated treatments and that acupuncture can help reduce the nausea related to chemotherapy. Even where there is little or no evidence for some types of CAM, many people with cancer say they gain a lot of benefit from using them.*

[*Ref.:<http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/cancer-help/about-cancer/treatment/complementary-alternative/about/why-people-use-complementary-or-alternative-therapies>]

Rising healthcare costs – can CAM help?

There is a growing body of evidence that indicates that integration of CAM into primary care not only improves citizens' health but it can potentially offer short and long-term savings in healthcare costs*. With its focus on supporting patient literacy and empowerment and maintaining health, integration of CAM's holistic methodologies and understanding into primary care can have long-term benefits for patients' and public health in general.

[*Ref.: Herman PM et al (2012). BMJ Open;2:e001046.

Kooreman P & Baars EW (2012). Eur J Health Econ, 13(6):769-76]

The affordability of most traditional medicines makes them all the more attractive at a time of soaring health-care costs and nearly universal austerity. Traditional medicine also stands out as a way of coping with the relentless rise of chronic non-communicable diseases.”

Dr Margaret Chan, WHO Director General in a speech given February 2013

Antimicrobial resistance



Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a major threat to the future health of all citizens worldwide. WHO states that in the European Union 5–12% of hospital patients acquire an infection during their stay. Each year, an estimated 400,000 present with a resistant strain, of whom, on average, 25,000 die. In addition to causing deaths and increased suffering, AMR has huge economic implications. Multidrug-resistant bacteria in the EU are estimated to cause an economic loss of more than €1.5 billion each year. Furthermore, there are few new antibiotics coming through the pharmaceutical industry. CAM products and practices should be utilised to help mitigate this growing problem. Research shows that various CAM modalities can both prevent and treat infectious complaints in humans and animals*, thus saving antibiotics for essential use and preventing antimicrobial resistance.

[*Ref.:Ulbricht C et al (2010). J Diet Suppl, 7:283-302;
Camerlink I et al (2010). Homeopathy, 99:57–62;
Sinha MN et al (2012). Homeopathy,101:5–12]

Sustaining the EU health workforce

The CAMbrella project* calculated there are some 300,000 CAM providers working in the EU. Most of them are currently practitioners or MDs working outside national health systems in the private sector. At the same time, there are predictions of a looming crisis in the provision of sufficient EU healthcare providers to meet future needs. In these circumstances, the health agenda has to change to emphasise prevention and the means to achieve healthy ageing. This can be delivered with the input from a ready made CAM workforce able to deliver relevant messages and practices that offer at least a partial solution to the problem.

[*Ref.: <http://www.cambrella.eu/home.php>]



“Health systems are .. being asked to provide more with fewer resources ..The broad solution lies in increasing the overall efficiency of our health systems, and investing in cost-effective innovation. Alternative medicine can play an important role in this. Any treatment which demonstrates better outcomes at lower costs is a step forward on the path towards more sustainable health systems. Patient empowerment is on the increase. It progressively serves to put patients in the driver's seat – taking charge and control of their own health.”

Mr Tonio Borg, Commissioner DG SANCO, June 2013

CAM - for a healthier Europe!

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