

Module III-8

Complementary therapies

Overview

Complementary therapies are increasingly used by the general population and health professionals worldwide. In some countries a complementary therapy practitioner could be the first encounter for healthcare assessment. The frequency of use of complementary therapies by people with diabetes is largely unknown, but probably mirrors the general population. Therefore, there is a need for diabetes educators to have some knowledge about the issues surrounding the use of complementary therapies by people with diabetes.

Complementary therapies are known by a variety of names, such as 'alternative', 'natural', and 'traditional'. The varied terminology can be applied differently in different countries, or even between regions of the same country. Importantly, although complementary therapies have a common philosophical basis, they are very heterogeneous in their approach; each therapy is different from the others and carries different risks and benefits.

Goal

To explore the place of complementary therapies in the management of diabetes

Objectives

After completing this module the participant will be able to:

- Discuss the philosophical basis for complementary therapies
- Identify the different complementary therapies available within his or her region
- Describe the frequency and types of therapies used by people with diabetes in the region
- Discuss the role of complementary therapies in diabetes management
- Describe issues relating to the safety and efficacy of complementary therapies, including the knowledge and competence of therapists, the potential for allergies, interactions and adverse events, fragmented care, and the issues surrounding unregulated practitioners and untested and unregulated substances

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice to people with diabetes about the use of complementary therapies that is non-judgmental and relevant to the particular country • Interpret research or articles regarding complementary medicines to determine the actual value of the products
Teaching strategies	Lectures, group discussion, visits to complementary therapists, debate, seminar
Suggested time	1-2 hours
Who should teach this module	Joint teaching between a complementary therapist and knowledgeable conventional practitioners
Evaluation of learning	Short assignment on the implications of the increasing use of complementary therapies for the practice of diabetes education in the relevant country or region
References	<p>Cochrane Collaboration. <i>The Cochrane Library complementary health field</i>. Cochrane Collaboration. Oxford, 2001.</p> <p>Dunning T. <i>Complementary therapies in the management of diabetes and vascular disease</i>. John Wiley and Sons. Chichester, 2006.</p> <p>Dunning T. Complementary therapies and diabetes – a perspective. <i>J Aust Diabetes Educ Assoc</i> 2002; 5: 13-5.</p> <p>Dunning T. <i>Essential oils in therapeutic care</i>. Australian Scholarly Publishing. Melbourne, 2007.</p> <p>McCabe P (Ed). <i>Complementary therapies in nursing and midwifery</i>. Ausmed Publications. Melbourne, 2000.</p> <p>Woodhart K. Herbal therapies in the treatment of type 2 diabetes. <i>J Aust Diabetes Educ Assoc</i> 2002; 5: 6-11.</p>

Detailed content for this module is available as a slide presentation at www.idf.org