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Complementary and alternative medicine use among adults: United States, 2002

Patricia M. Barnes MA * ... Richard L. Nahin PhD, MPH

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Objective

This report presents selected estimates of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) use among U.S. adults, using data from the 2002 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS), conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS).

Methods

Data for the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized population were collected using computer-assisted personal interviews (CAPI). This report is based on 31,044 interviews of adults age 18 years and over. Statistics shown in this report were age adjusted to the year 2000 U.S. standard population.

Results

Sixty-two percent of adults used some form of CAM therapy during the past 12 months

when the definition of CAM therapy included prayer specifically for health reasons. When prayer specifically for health reasons was excluded from the definition, 36% of adults used some form of CAM therapy during the past 12 months. The 10 most commonly used CAM therapies during the past 12 months were use of prayer specifically for one's own health (43.0%), prayer by others for one's own health (24.4%), natural products (18.9%), deep breathing exercises (11.6%), participation in prayer group for one's own health (9.6%), meditation (7.6%), chiropractic care (7.5%), yoga (5.1%), massage (5.0%), and diet-based therapies (3.5%). Use of CAM varies by sex, race, geographic region, health insurance status, use of cigarettes or alcohol, and hospitalization. CAM was most often used to treat back pain or back problems, head or chest colds, neck pain or neck problems, joint pain or stiffness, and anxiety or depression. Adults age 18 years or over who used CAM were more likely to do so because they believed that CAM combined with conventional medical treatments would help (54.9%) and/or they thought it would be interesting to try (50.1%). Most adults who have ever used CAM have used it within the past 12 months, although there is variation by CAM therapy.



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Keywords

complementary and alternative medicine; National Health Interview Survey

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