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Integrating modern, alternative and complementary medicine: A holistic approach to better patient care and cost-effectiveness

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Review

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Abstract:

This comprehensive review examines the potential benefits of combining modern conventional medicine with alternative and complementary medicine approaches for the treatment of various medical conditions. As healthcare costs continue to escalate globally, there is a pressing need for solutions that not only improve health outcomes but also offer cost-effectiveness. The current model of care often leads to overuse of pharmaceutical interventions, raising concerns about adverse effects.

This article has done a scoping review to map and critically analyse the existing literature on this topic, with a focus on patient outcomes, cost-effectiveness, and implementation strategies. The review provides robust evidence, through critical analysis of 312 key studies, indicating significant potential in a combined approach, with specific examples drawn from conditions such as arthritis, sciatica, disc prolapse, COPD, fibromyalgia, IBS, Parkinson's disease, dementia, psychosis, anxiety, and depression. It illustrates that integrating alternative and complementary medicine with conventional methods can yield substantial cost savings, reduced side effects, improved patient satisfaction, and enhanced health outcomes.

The article also subsequently proposes a step-wise approach to this integration, advocating for improved cross-disciplinary communication, education, and



regulatory oversight to overcome existing barriers . It contributes to the body of evidence supporting a shift from the compartmentalized view of healthcare towards a more patient-centred, holistic model. The evidence presented is compelling and timely, given the growing public interest in alternative and complementary therapies, making this a significant addition to the literature on integrated healthcare.

Keywords:

Integrated health; Integrated medicine; integrated health practitioners; holistic modern medicine; modern medicine with CAM; holistic care

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