

S/A 4071: Social/Cultural Aspects of Health and Illness:
Class 28: Complementary & Alternative Medicine 1

- * Complementary & alternative medicine (CAM) includes all health care practices that differ from allopathic medicine. Usually not taught at allopathic medical schools or available in hospitals (though some variations)

- * Based on treating/healing the whole person: body, mind & spirit

- * One may have differing relationships to allopathic doctors:
 - (1) Ancillary workers (controlled e.g. nurses)
 - (2) Limited medical practitioners (dentists)
 - (3) Marginal practitioners (naturopaths, chiropractors)
 - (4) Quasi practitioners (psychic healers)
 - (5) Parallel professions (osteopaths)

- * Relationship to medical profession the result of strategies/tactics used by allopaths

- * Relationship of CAM to allopaths changing as more members of the public use alternative therapies, particularly for chronic conditions. Estimated to grow further both in Canada & worldwide, even among the “well”

- * CAM also moving into the mainstream, becoming incorporated to varying degrees into medical associations, centres, courses at med schools, research, journals, & insurance coverage. Schools of CAM are also expanding

- * Allopathic doctors have varying opinions re: the effectiveness of CAM (e.g. acupuncture & chiropractors most favored; homeopathy,

naturopathy & reflexology least). About half felt conventional medicine could benefit or learn something useful

* Some patients choose CAM when dissatisfied/skeptical of traditional approaches & treatments; others base it in their alternate outlooks on life (e.g. ecology, holistic viewpoints)

* Desire for more personal control tends to be associated with patient choice of CAM

* Classifications:

(1) US Office of Alternative medicine:

- diet & nutrition
- mind/body techniques
- bio-electromagnetics
- traditional/folk remedies
- pharmacologic & biologic remedies
- manual healing
- herbal medicine

(2) Montbriand:

- spiritual (prayer & psychic surgery)
- psychological (visualization/cognitive)
- physical (herbs, vitamins, diets, etc.)

Note: also found many users don't tell their doctors

* Cassileth (1991) found that matched cancer patients treated by allopaths & CAM survived equal periods of time, but CAM patients reported better quality of life

Chiropractors:

- * Largest competing health care occupation in Canada. Once considered “quackery,” but now has limited funding from medicare
- * Practice involves ancient technique of spinal manipulation
- * Re-emerged in the work of Daniel David Palmer (late 1800's). Popularized by his son “BJ”.
- * Schism in 1924 between “straight’s” (focus on spine only) & “mixers” (who advocate adjusting diet & physical therapy) continues to this day.
- * Two patterns of practice: osteopathy(who also do surgery) & chiropractic. The latter attacked by allopaths as “quackery” in the 1970's, despite public support.
- * Chiropractic theory varies with allopathic theory in 3 ways:
 - disease precedes symptoms for a relatively long period of time
 - pathogens a necessary, but not sufficient condition for the initiation of a disease process
 - chiropractic care is holistic: can treat health problems beyond specific musculo-skeletal conditions
- * Possible futures for chiropractors relative to allopaths:
 - remain a marginal, partially funded profession
 - having their practices taken over by allopaths
 - subjugation to the allopathic medical profession
 - an increase in status/legitimacy to compete with allopaths
- * Today the number of chiropractors has grown to about 7000 in Canada

(about half in Ontario). The third largest group of primary medical care practitioners after doctors & dentists

* Chiropractic services covered by medicare, but usually limited to a few visits a year

* Admission to chiropractic training requires 3 years of university (preferably in science), then a four year program of study at Chiropractic college.

* Much practice is limited to treatment of musculo-skeletal disorders. Research shows superiority of such treatments for neck & back injuries. Suggests such treatment may also help some other conditions (e.g. epilepsy, asthma, & diabetes).

Naturopathy:

* A form of holistic health care. Sees health/illness as natural components of whole human being: body, mind & spirit

* Healing of unique individual requires activation of the normal healing processes of the human body

* Homeopathy (Hahnemann): “like cures like” : the Greek idea of balancing the natural forces:

- give minute amounts of a substance that causes the same symptoms experienced by the patient
- different/unique people react differently to the same illness
- the body should receive only 1 remedy at a time, otherwise the body's healing powers will be divided
- the doctor should administer the minimum dose (which will have

the same effect as a larger one)

* Sickness = a message rather than a biological pathology. Re-evaluation of life involved along with stimulation of the person's natural healing force

* Naturopathy includes nutrition, botanicals, homeopathic medicine, physical therapy, hydrotherapy, acupuncture & traditional Chinese medicine. Largely unregulated

* Homeopathic medicine originated at a time when conventional medicine was primitive & brutal, frequently lethal. Yet lab successes & scientific focus gradually enabled allopaths to become dominant at expense of homeopaths

* Nevertheless, homeopathy is widely considered a legitimate alternative in many Western countries, particularly in Europe

* Research has begun to confirm the value of homeopathy in treating certain conditions (rheumatoid arthritis, infectious diseases in the 19th century, etc.)

* Homeopathy first arrived in the US in 1825, later founding the first medical association. The first naturopathic college founded in 1900. Hostility between naturopaths & allopaths continued until turn of the century, after which (divided, diverse) naturopaths rapidly declined

* In Ontario, regulation of naturopaths began in 1925. By early 1950's naturopaths & chiropractors enabled to practice/govern themselves

* In Canada, about 300 naturopaths are registered with the Canadian Naturopathic Association. Not covered by medicare. Regulated since mid-1800's. Once represented on College of Physicians & Surgeons, had

own hospital & dispensary. Slowly squeezed out by allopaths.

- * Ontario College of Naturopathic medicine opened in 1978

- * In 1982, allopaths attempted to get government to end regulation due to naturopaths alleged potential to harm patients.

- * Naturopaths responded, but government went ahead and deregulated them (legal limbo later reverted to licensing)

- * Problems: nature of scientific claims: some sub-disciplines focus on universal scientific laws, others on holistic uniqueness of individuals

- * Nevertheless, despite historical declines in favor of allopathic medicine, recently naturopathy is becoming vary popular in North America & elsewhere.

- * Currently naturopaths take extensive training, & are licensed to practice in BC, Manitoba, Saskatchewan & Ontario, plus operate (unlicensed) in other provinces. Poised to grow in popularity.

- * Naturopaths sued for malpractice less often, with less serious consequences for patients

- * Therapeutic touch is a relatively new & promising technique, with some empirical support.