

# **C.A.M. Use of HIV/AIDS Patients in the Largest Mexican American Border Region**

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# Abstract

**PURPOSE:** To evaluate the use of complimentary alternative medicine (CAM) in a local HIV/AIDS clinic (Centro De Salud Familiar La Fe CARE center) serving over 400 clients. This was a subgroup analysis of a larger study looking at the use of CAM in the El Paso region (El Paso, Texas and Las Cruces, New Mexico).

**METHODS:** This was a prospective study of patients who visited our clinic during the study period between April and October of 2000. Only participants over 18 years of age were included, and each participant completing a twelve page bilingual questionnaire received a \$5.00 compensation fee. The questionnaire used assessed the use of CAM in this population during the previous 12 months.

**RESULTS:** A total of 40 participants completed the survey for this study. Eight percent (n=3) of those surveyed were female, and 93% (n=37) were male. Eighty-eight percent of the participants were Hispanic. The mean age of the survey respondents was 39.5 years with a range of 24-69 years of age. The overall incidence of CAM use by participants was reported as 85% (34 out of the 40 surveyed). The most common CAM providers utilized by the surveyed population were herbalist or "hierbero(a)" (19.4 %) and self help group or "grupos de ayuda mutua" (11.1%). The most commonly reported herbal or home remedies reported was chamomile or "manzanilla" (n=13; 20%), aloe vera or "sabila" (n=7; 11 %), and garlic or "ajo" (n=7, 11%). Of interest, of the herbal and/or home remedies reported, 4 of 23 have been implicated with adverse reactions or drug interactions in the literature. Nutritional and commercial product use was reported by 29 of 40 participants (73%), with the most commonly reported product being multi-vitamins (n=16; 22.2%).

**CONCLUSIONS:** A wide range of CAM use by our HIV/AIDS clinic surveyed population was documented in this survey study. Some of the reported CAM therapies have been found to have undesirable effects on different disease states and drug therapies, and data is lacking on many of the other therapies reported. With this information, the importance of documenting CAM use when performing drug histories cannot be underemphasized.

# Background

- The study was conducted in a HIV/AIDS clinic located in El Paso, Texas.
- NEJM 1993 - 34% of Americans use CAM
- Herbalgram 1997 – 60 million Americans use herbs accounting for \$3.24 billion in sales.
- JAMA 1998 – 42% of Americans use CAM. Most common CAM: relaxation techniques 16.3%, herbal products 12.1%, massage therapy 11.1%, chiropractic 11%, spiritual healing 7%, megavitamins 5.5%, (Folk remedies 4%).
- JAMA 1999 – 8.3% of the US population uses unconventional therapies.
- J.Hol.Nurs. 1996 – Most common Cam among Mexican – Americans: herbal Products 44.1%, spiritual healing 29.5%, massage therapy 28.3%, relaxation techniques 22.5%, chiropractic 19%, “curandero” 13.6%, megavitamins 8.6%.
- American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA) – Recommendations to stop herbal products two to three weeks prior to surgery.

# Methodology

- The study was IRB approved and patients gave informed consent.
- Prospective analysis of patients visiting a local HIV/AIDS clinic between April and October 2000.
- Inclusion criteria: more than 18 years of age and positive HIV status
- A clinical psychologist trained the individual interviewing and collecting data.
- A 12 page bilingual questionnaire was used to collect the data.
- A \$5.00 compensation fee was provided to participants.
- The primary endpoint of this study was to establish CAM usage patterns of HIV/AIDS patients in our local clinic.

# Demographics

	<i>Number</i>		<i>%</i>	
Female	3		7.5	
Male	37		92.5	
White	5		12.5	
Hispanic	35		87.5	
Mexican American U.S. born.	11		31.4	
Mexican Residents Non U.S. born.	24		68.6	
	<i>Number (N)</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std Dev</i>	<i>Range</i>
Age	40	39.5	9.73	24-69

# Herbal and Home Remedies

<i>Cam Product</i>	<i>(N)=40 Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Chamomile	13	33.0
Garlic <sup>a,b</sup>	7	17.5
Aloe Vera	7	17.5
Mullein <sup>a</sup>	6	15.0
Eucalyptus	4	10.0
Lime	4	10.0
Marijuana	3	7.5
Corn silk	3	7.5
Celery	3	7.5
Cactus	2	5.0
Oregano	2	5.0
Parsley	2	5.0
Chaparral <sup>a</sup>	2	5.0
Other	12	30.0

a - Herbal products that have been implicated with adverse reactions.

b - Herbal products that have been implicated with drug interactions.

# Total Instances of Herbal and Home Remedies Used By All Patients.

<i>CAM</i>	<i>% Instances Used</i>
Chamomile	20.0
Garlic <sup>a,b</sup>	11.0
Aloe Vera	11.0
Mullein <sup>a</sup>	8.9
Eucalyptus	5.9
Lime	5.9
Marijuana	4.5
Corn silk	4.5
Celery	4.5
Cactus	2.9
Oregano	2.9
Parsley	2.9
Chaparral <sup>a</sup>	2.9
Other	17.9

a - Herbal products that have been implicated with adverse reactions.

b - Herbal products that have been implicated with drug interactions.

# CAM Use By Provider

(N)40

<i>Provider</i>	<i>Number Patients</i>	<i>% Patients</i>	<i>% Instances</i>
Herbalist	7	17.5	19.4
Self-help groups	4	10.0	11.1
Massage	3	7.5	8.3
Spiritual healing	3	7.5	8.3
Acupuncture	3	7.5	8.3
Naturalist	3	7.5	8.3
Meditation	3	7.5	8.3
Relaxation	2	5.0	5.5
“Curandero”	2	5.0	5.5
Chiropractor	2	5.0	5.5
Energy healing	2	5.0	5.5
Lifestyle diet	1	2.5	2.7
Urine therapy	1	2.5	2.7



# Nutritional and Commercial

(N)=40

<i>Product</i>	<i>Number Patients</i>	<i>% Patients</i>	<i>% Instances</i>
Multi-vitamin	16	40.0	23.9
Vit.C	8	20.0	11.9
Vit. E	8	20.0	11.9
Vit. B12	8	20.0	11.9
Vit. B & C	7	17.5	10.4
Calcium	6	15.0	8.9
Vit. B6	5	12.5	7.5
Vit. B1	4	10.0	5.9
Iron	2	5.0	2.9
Echinacea <sup>a,b</sup>	1	2.5	1.5
Cat's Claw	1	2.5	1.5
Creatine	1	2.5	1.5

a - Herbal products that have been implicated with adverse reactions.

b - Herbal products that have been implicated with drug interactions.

# Herbal and Commercial Products Implicated With Drug Interactions, Adverse Reactions and Disease State Interactions.

<i>Product</i>	<i>Drug interaction</i>	<i>Adverse reaction</i>	<i>Disease state</i>
Garlic	X		X
Mullein		X	
Chaparral		X	
Rue		X	
Peyote		X	
Wormwood		X	
Ginseng	X		X
Ginkgo biloba	X		X
Echinacea	X	X	
Glucosamine	X		X
Ginger	X		X
Saw Palmetto	X		
Ma huang	X		X
St. John's Wort	X		X
Marijuana		X	

# Results

- A total of 40 patients were entered into the study.
- 85% of the participants report the use of CAM during the study period.
- 60% of the participants report the use of at least one herbal product
- 33% of patients requiring surgery reported taking garlic during the same period of time as their surgery.
- 87% of participants did not tell their physician about herbal product use.
- Family (54%) and friends (25%) were the most common source of advised for herbal product use.
- 54% of participants purchased drugs from Mexico.
- Identified 19 instances of potential drug interactions, disease interactions, or adverse reactions associated with herbal use.

# Conclusion

A wide range of CAM use by HIV/AIDS patients in our clinic was documented in this survey study. Of the documented herbal products used by this population, some have been found to have undesirable effects for individuals consuming them. With the completion of this survey study, the importance of documenting CAM use when performing drug/medication histories as part of the medical history cannot be overemphasized.