

# Chapter 32

## Complementary and Alternative Therapies

# Chapter 32

## Lesson 32.1

# Learning Objectives

## Theory

- 1) Discuss the use of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) in integrative medicine.
- 2) Consider each therapy that is considered a part of CAM.
- 3) Examine five commonly used complementary and alternative therapies.
- 4) Contrast four mind-body therapies.

## Clinical Practice

- 1) Assist patients in using relaxation and imagery.

# Complementary and Alternative Therapies

- Complementary therapies—used in conjunction with other medical treatments
- Alternative therapies—used in place of mainstream medicine
  - Example: macrobiotic diet therapy used to treat cancer instead of having surgery, radiation, or chemotherapy

# Complementary and Alternative Therapies (cont'd)

- Many people in North America are seeking alternatives to the high cost of medicine and pharmaceuticals
- National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) established to provide research-based evidence of the efficacy of the therapies—<http://nccam.nih.gov>

# Complementary and Alternative Therapies (cont'd)

- NCCAM classifies alternative therapies in five categories:
  - Alternative medical systems
  - Mind-body interventions
  - Biologically based therapies
  - Manipulative and body-based methods
  - Energy therapies

# Alternative Medical Systems: Homeopathic Medicine

- Teaches that symptoms are signs of the body's effort to get rid of disease
- Disease can be cured by giving small doses of substances that produce symptoms of the disease
- Stimulates a person's natural defenses, alleviating the problem
- Three principles:
  - Like cures like
  - The greater the dilution of the remedy, the greater its potency
  - Illness is specific to the individual

# Alternative Medical Systems: Naturopathic Medicine

- A philosophy directed at the prevention of disease
- Use of natural means to promote health
- Lifestyle management, natural foods, massage, used with regular exercise to maintain the body at a high level of wellness through use of the body's inherent healing ability

# Alternative Medical Systems: Traditional Chinese Medicine

- Based on opposition of polarities (yin/yang); the elements of wood, fire, earth, metal, and water; and the flow of energy (chi) in the body
- Focuses on looking for underlying causes of imbalance and patterns of disharmony in the body
- Uses medicinal plants, acupuncture, massage, Tai Chi, and Qi Gong for therapy

# Alternative Medical Systems: Traditional Chinese Medicine (cont'd)

- Acupuncture
  - A branch of Chinese medicine in which needles are used to stimulate certain points on the body (called *meridians* to stimulate or disperse the flow of energy)
  - Can be an effective method to control pain
  - Also used to increase immunity

# Figure 32-1: Patient undergoing acupuncture for relief of pain



From Hunt S.A. (2007). *Saunders Fundamentals of Medical Assisting*. St. Louis: Saunders.

# Alternative Medical Systems: Traditional Chinese Medicine (cont'd)

- Qi Gong
  - A form of exercise (stimulation therapy)
  - Improves health by redirecting mental focus, controlling breathing, improving coordination, and promoting relaxation
  - Activates the natural currents that flow along the body's meridians to rebalance the body's own healing ability

# Alternative Medical Systems: Ayurveda

- The traditional Hindu system of medicine
- Uses combinations of herbs, minerals, purgatives, massage, meditation, special diets
- Focuses on restoring and strengthening the body, mind, and spirit
- Healing focus is on maintenance of balance and wholeness to prevent illness

# Alternative Medical Systems: Shamanism

- The shaman uses techniques to achieve a nonordinary reality, or a “shamanic” state of consciousness
- May perform various ceremonies including burning particular plants and herbs to bring about the rebalancing of the individual with nature

# Alternative Medical Systems: Folk Medicine

- A holistic approach to healing practiced throughout Latin America
  - Illness is seen as an imbalance
    - Hot and cold
    - Patient and the environment
    - Parts of the body
    - Patient and the spiritual realm
  - Biologic compounds, foods, and herbs are used to treat the physical components of the illness
  - A curandero treats the supernatural components

# Alternative Medical Systems: Native American Medicine

- Healing herbs and ceremonies combined with a spiritual emphasis are used to treat ailing patients
- Therapies based on the belief that spirit, mind, and emotions all interact with the environment
- Patient's disease or disorder is believed to be caused by a disharmony in the patient's connection to nature and the spirit world

# Mind-Body Interventions: Relaxation Therapy

- Used to ease stress and is helpful for a variety of chronic illnesses
- Relaxation induces a light state of altered consciousness through refocusing, conscious breathing, and body awareness

# Mind-Body Interventions: Imagery

- Uses a visual stimulus to produce a particular physiologic change that can decrease stress or promote healing
- Useful in decreasing pain, and can be particularly helpful to patients undergoing painful procedures

# Mind-Body Interventions: Meditation

- Involves focusing attention on a single repetitive stimulus, thereby decreasing all other stimuli
- Alters consciousness and can bring a beneficial mind-body response
- Induces a restful state and lowers heart and respiratory rates; may reduce anxiety

# Mind-Body Interventions: Biofeedback

- Technique that trains patient to lessen symptoms
- Learn to control particular internal physiologic processes that normally occur involuntarily, such as heart rate or blood pressure
- With practice, a person can use this information to gain control over the “involuntary” activity

# Mind-Body Interventions: Hypnotherapy

- Used to alter behavior, retrieve memories, and induce anesthesia
- A hypnotic state is created in which suggestions are implanted that remain during the posthypnotic period

# Mind-Body Interventions: Music, Art, and Dance Therapy

- Art therapy helpful when the person has difficulty expressing feelings verbally
- Music therapy beneficial for expressing feelings, reducing stress and anxiety, enhancing relaxation; also a distraction to aid in pain management
- Dance therapy promotes recognition of feelings and awareness of the body

# Mind-Body Interventions: Yoga

- A spiritual practice that combines exercise, controlled breathing, posture, and mental focus to bring about positive effects on the body and mind
- Effects
  - Regulating blood pressure and heart rate
  - Increasing circulation
  - Aiding digestion
  - Healing chronic back pain
  - Helping with other disorders

# Figure 32-2: Yoga



From Lindeman, C.A., & McAthie, M. (1999). *Fundamentals of Contemporary Nursing Practice*. Philadelphia: Saunders.

# Mind-Body Interventions: Humor

- Proven very helpful as complementary treatment
- Can speed the course of healing and decrease pain
- Generally will raise spirits and help to bring about a more positive outlook

# Mind-Body Interventions: Prayer

- Helps reduce stress, promotes healing, and may arrest disease
- May be practiced individually or in groups as intercessory prayer
- Prayer chains
  - Different people pray for a set time for an individual's recovery over a period of hours or days; considered beneficial by many people

# Question 1

Which type of complementary therapy is a form of Chinese exercise-stimulation therapy that is supposed to improve health by redirecting mental focus, controlling breathing, improving coordination, and promoting relaxation?

- 1) Acupuncture
- 2) Qi Gong
- 3) Ayurveda
- 4) Shamanism

# Question 2

Peggy has a patient who verbalizes that she prefers to approach her illness in a holistic way. Which type of medicine uses this approach?

- 1) Homeopathic
- 2) Naturopathic
- 3) Chinese
- 4) Folk

# Question 3

Sara's patient is nervous about a painful procedure tomorrow. Her patient is using a visual stimulus to produce a particular physiologic change that can decrease stress or pain. Her patient is using which relaxing therapy?

- 1) Imagery
- 2) Meditation
- 3) Biofeedback
- 4) Hypnotherapy

# Chapter 32

## Lesson 32.2

# Learning Objectives

## Theory

- 5) Direct patients to information needed to make a decision on whether to use an herbal preparation.
- 6) Describe the desired outcome of spinal manipulation during chiropractic treatment.

## Clinical Practice

- 2) Assess the use of complementary and alternative therapies by assigned patients.
- 3) Direct patients to information about complementary and alternative therapies.

# Biologically Based Therapies: Herbal Therapy/Aromatherapy

- Herbal therapy
  - Used by more than 70% of the world's population
  - Medicines contain plants as their active ingredient
  - Used to treat a wide variety of conditions
  - Many herbs interact with prescription drugs
- Aromatherapy
  - Oils from plants absorbed through the skin or inhaled
  - Thought to act on the brain to evoke pleasant feelings related to past experiences and emotions

# Herbs Determined to Be Safe by Non-U.S. Authorities

- Aloe
- Astragalus
- Bilberry
- Cat's claw
- Chamomile
- Dong quai
- Echinacea
- Feverfew
- Garlic
- Ginger
- Ginkgo biloba
- Ginseng
- Goldenseal
- Hawthorn
- Milk thistle
- St. John's wort
- Saw palmetto
- Valerian

# Unsafe Herbs

- Borage
- Calamus
- Chaparral
- Coltsfoot
- Comfrey
- Ephedra (ma huang)
- Germander
- Life root
- Pokeroor
- Sassafras

# Manipulative and Body-Based Methods

- Chiropractic therapy
  - Uses manipulation of the spine for symptomatic relief and improved functioning
  - Brings the spinal components back into correct alignment, thereby decreasing or eliminating pain
  - Exercise, ice, heat, electrical stimulation, and massage may be used in conjunction with spinal manipulation

# Manipulative and Body-Based Methods (cont'd)

- Massage therapy
  - Uses soft tissue manipulation to improve health
  - Stroking, kneading, friction, and vibration used to relieve muscle pain and promote comfort

# Energy Therapies

- Reiki
  - A practitioner acts as a conduit for healing energy that is directed into the patient's energy field or body
  - Channels energy to the patient, and the patient's body does the healing
- Therapeutic touch
  - Alters body energy fields to restore natural healing powers
  - The hands of the practitioner are passed over the patient to ascertain where tensions or excessive energies exist
  - Touch may be used to redirect energies and reestablish energy balance

# Question 4

Chloe's patient states, "I often use herbs when I am nauseated." Which herb would Chloe's patient use?

- 1) Echinacea
- 2) Ginseng
- 3) Ginger
- 4) St. John's wort

# Question 5

Jim's patient asks if there are any herbs to shrink the prostate gland. Which of the following helps shrink the prostate gland?

- 1) Hawthorn
- 2) Milk thistle
- 3) Saw palmetto
- 4) Valerian