HEALTH AWARENESS AND POPULARITY OF ALLOPATHIC, AYURVEDIC AND HOMEOPATHIC SYSTEMS OF MEDICINE AMONG NAVI MUMBAI POPULATION

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ABSTRACT

Common reasons for frustration against Modern medicine are due to its serious side effects and lack of curative value in many of the chronic disorders. Traditional systems rely heavily on herbal material compared to modern system of medicine (allopathy). The aim of this study was to find out the awareness, misconceptions and myths of common man regarding traditional systems (Ayurveda, Homeopathy) and the overall preference of all systems and the preference of a system in case of common ailments and medical emergencies. The responses (400) obtained on the questionnaire sheet have been presented as Bar charts and Pie charts depending upon type of response along with general conclusion and suggestions.

Keywords: Awareness, Allopathy, Ayurveda, Homeopathy, Population preference, Questionnaire.
INTRODUCTION

Today’s medicinal science has been partly developed from ancient indigenous science practiced in various countries and many of the pharmaceuticals currently available in the modern medicine have long history of usage as herbal remedies including opium, ephedrine, digitalis and quinine. According to World Health Organization (WHO) about 80 per cent of population in these countries still rely on traditional or herbal medicines for their primary health-care needs.[1] India has one of the richest plant based medical traditions in the world. It is a tradition that is of remarkable contemporary relevance for ensuring health security to the teeming millions. There are over 1.5 million practitioners of traditional medicinal system using medicinal plants in preventive, health promotional and curative applications.[2] There are over 7800 medicinal drug-manufacturing units in India, which consume about 2000 tones of herbs annually.[3] The herbal products today symbolize safety in contrast to the synthetics that are regarded as unsafe for humans and environment.[4]

The modern, allopathic medicines became popular and traditional therapy was put away from mainstream. Allopathy focuses on diagnosis, treatment and cure for acute illnesses via potent pharmaceutical drugs, surgery, radiation and other treatment modalities.[5] It works in hand with technology that aids to devise diagnostic procedures, drugs with specific actions, vaccines, sophisticated surgical procedures and transplants, hence, imparting it the top position among all medical systems.[6], but it has flaws like inefficacy in curing certain chronic diseases and unavoidable adverse effects, which need to be addressed seriously to generate an efficient and safe healthcare system. Traditional systems rely heavily on herbal materials compared to modern system of medicine (allopathy). Knowledge base of traditional system originates from years of experience, observation, empiricism and intuition that is passed over generations.[7] only comprehensive approach covering all the aspects of health with drawback of inadequacy in managing emergencies and lack of technology assisted diagnostic techniques must be taken care of.

India has a very long, safe and continuous usage experience of many herbal drugs in the officially recognized alternative systems of health Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, Homeopathy and Naturopathy. These systems have rightfully existed side-by-side with Allopathy. The present study was undertaken to find out the awareness, misconceptions of common man regarding traditional systems (Ayurveda, Homeopathy) and the overall preference of all medicinal system in case of common ailments and medical emergency.
MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design: This was a questionnaire based study involving general population. The study was conducted, over a period of 4 months from Jan 2014 to April 2014 at Navi Mumbai, India. Four hundred persons (both male and female) in the age group of 18-60 years consisting of different educational level responded to the questionnaire.

Material used: A set of questionnaire called proforma was drafted keeping above mentioned objectives, in mind. The language was kept very simple so as to present no problem in understanding the spirit of question. The objectives were duly explained to each and every respondent and doubts, if any, were clarified. Questions and their responses are presented as Bar charts, Pie charts depending upon the type of response.

Subjects: The study included 400 persons residing in Navi Mumbai.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

![Bar chart showing preferential choice of therapy](image1)

**Figure 1: Preferential choice of therapy**

![Bar chart showing incidence of side effects](image2)

**Figure 2: Incidence of side effects in various therapy systems**
Figure 3: Choice of therapy for emergency

Figure 4: Preferences and friendliness

Figure 5: Differential Choice of therapy for different diseases
Total number of participants in the study was 400. The survey reports 36% respondents were satisfied with the efficacy of ayurvedic drugs. Respondents are of firm belief that herbal drugs are absolutely free from side effects but they have no trust in vendors. In spite of general tilt towards herbal drugs, large portion of population up to 90% prefer allopathic medicine in case of emergency. The Allopathic system still remains the first choice in state of medical emergency. In general, it was found that 89% of people experience more side effects with allopathic medicine, 8% in ayurvedic medicine and only 3% in homeopathic medicine. The basic reasons are allopathic medicine’s incomplete approach towards health, inability to reach the root causes of chronic diseases and its general failure to provide safety and affordability. In case of long term diseases 45% prefer ayurvedic system of medicine, 34% prefer allopathic and 21% go for homeopathic medicine. For allopathic medicine 30% people said it is convenient to use, 55% prefer homeopathic and only 5% people prefer ayurvedic medicines. Most participants were found to use traditional wisdom as therapy before consulting a professional health practitioner.

Although remarkable technological advances have taken place in the fields of prevention, control, and cure of diseases, the health status of people globally is far from satisfactory. Allopathic medicine has number of advantages that make it to the top of most medicine systems in the present time, especially in emergency care. Hence, it seems that the integration of allopathy and other traditional systems can be an important move in the direction of preserving, protecting and rejuvenating health along with effective and safe management of diseases. What is needed is to use the modern technologies to explore the traditional concepts so that they can be interpreted in the light of modern healthcare. Let limping health care system run towards a new era of medicine with enhanced clinical potential, clearly defined indications and ”do no harm strategy” after incorporation of our old traditional system for providing best healthcare system to the society. This can only be possible if modern clinicians and traditional medicine industry join hands right from new drug discovery, manufacturing of the drugs and their clinical applications.

**CONCLUSION**

Many participants were found to use more than one system of medicine for disease prevention, cure and a better life. Studies need to be carried out to explore this aspect. The appropriate steps are required to be taken to spread the awareness about importance of the traditional system in the society. This can be made possible by integration of Modern
medicine with Traditional systems of medicine. Traditional systems must undergo Evidence Based approach as carried out in Modern medicine. Traditional medicines must be extensively exposed to clinical research to establish efficacy and safety without any bias.

REFERENCES