SELF MEDICATION – INTEGRATING COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINES WITH OTCS AND PRESCRIPTION MEDICINES

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Where are we going today?

- Medication & professional services use by Australian pharmacy customers
  - Customer expectations of pharmacy practice and complementary medicine integration
  - Safety of OTC complementary medicine products & how consumers manage safety issues

- Pharmacy practice & integration of complementary medicine
  - Hospital and community settings

- Integrative solutions

- Integrative models emerging in community medical and pharmacy practice settings
Perceptions, use and attitudes of pharmacy customers on complementary medicines and pharmacy practice

Lesley A Braun¹,²*, Evelin Tiralongo³, Jenny M Wilkinson⁴, Ondine Spitzer², Michael Bailey⁶, Susan Poole⁵, Michael Dooley⁵
Survey of 1131 pharmacy customers attending 60 community pharmacies (Vic, NSW, Qld)

In the previous 12 months:
- 61% used prescription medicines
- 93% visited a medical doctor
- 71% took a CM product
- 39% saw a CM practitioner

Braun et al BMC CAM July 2010
What CMs were taken? (n=793)

- Multivitamin: 49
- Fish oils: 47
- Vitamin C: 30
- Glucosamine: 29
- Vitamin B: 25
- Probiotics: 17
- CoQ10: 7
- Ginkgo biloba: 5
- St Johns wort: 5
- Valerian: 4
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Myself</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical doctor</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends/family</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturopath/herbalist</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacy assistant</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
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</table>
Are your CMs effective?

- 30% very effective
- 42% effective enough
- 10% somewhat effective
- 16% unsure
- 0.5% not effective
$\frac{1}{3}$rd GPs practice IM

Figure 2. GP's frequency of recommending or prescribing complementary medicines in the last 12 months, NPS Complementary Medicines GP Survey 2008, n=1178

Is self care with CM likely to increase?

- Yes, chiefly due to our **ageing population** & associated increased prevalence of chronic health conditions

- By definition, these conditions have **no conventional medicine ‘cure’**
  - So the role of CM in ameliorating symptoms, promoting health and enhancing healing seems **particularly relevant**.
  - Communities, friends and families play a crucial role in meeting continuing care needs of people with chronic health conditions
  - CM used to improve symptoms, reduce side effects of drug therapy, reduce reliance on drug therapy

*Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice; 13(4), 2007, 232-239*
Pharmacy customer survey

Use of CMs doesn’t reduce with age

Over 50 yrs vs under 50: 71% vs 71% NS

Over 60 yrs vs under 60: 69% vs 72% NS

Braun L et al. BMC CAM July; 2010
Is self care with CM likely to increase?

- Yes, increased public access to information about CM
- Yes, increased sense of entitlement to good QOL
- Yes, increased interest in personal wellness & active healthcare
- Yes, decreased interest in paternalism
- Patients are researching and exploring CM therapies on their own because mainstream medical communities provide little help

  Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice; 13(4), 2007, 232-239

- Pharmacists are no better at providing guidance

  Braun L et al. BMC CAM July; 2010
Customers expect more from pharmacists
(results from total sample ie CM users + non-users)

- 92% thought pharmacists should provide safety information about CMs
- 90% thought pharmacists should check for drug-CM interactions
- 87% thought pharmacists should recommend CMs if they are effective
- 77% thought pharmacists should record CM use in medication profiles
What do consumers want?

- More information on CM product labels
- More product information in general
- More information from pharmacists
- Access to naturopaths in pharmacy (!)
  - 56% of total sample
  - Approx 2/3rds of CM users
Safety of OTC CM products
Safety of OTC CM products

- Have you ever experienced a side effect to a CM product?
  - 7% of CM users YES (n=56)

How serious was it?
- Of those reporting a side effect
  - 56% ‘mild - no treatment required’
  - 19% ‘moderate – required a visit to Dr or other healthcare provider’
  - 6% ‘severe – required hospitalisation’
CM users
N=793

Side effect?

NO
N=738 (93%)

YES (7%)
N=56

Decreased the dose
0.5% CMs users
N=4

Changed to another CM product
0.9% of CMs users
N=7

Got advice From a healthcare Professional
0.9% of CMs users
N=7

Stopped Product
5% of CMs users
N=43
A substantial number of pharmacy customers choose CMs by themselves or based on advice from family and friends.

Most think their CMs are effective.

Few people using CMs are experiencing serious adverse reactions, according to self-report.

If they do experience a side effect, most manage this on their own.

*i.e. self care not only involves selecting CM products but also managing CM-induced side effects*
Evolution of the pharmacy practice model

- 1970’s
  - Distribution of pharmaceutical medicines
    - Automation virtually non-existent
    - Patient records were all paper-based
    - Relatively few prescription & OTC medicines compared to today
    - Virtually no complementary medicine products OTC in pharmacy
## Evolution of the pharmacy practice model & CM integration

### Hospital pharmacy
- Clinical pharmacists on wards providing advice on rational prescribing
- Drug information specialists
- Specialised drug preparation by pharmacists
- Outreach pharmacists
- Clinical trial pharmacists
- Research pharmacists
- Little integration with complementary medicine

### Community pharmacy
- Medication review specialists
- Pharmacy specialists: wound care, diabetes, weight loss,
- Integration of complementary medicine began in 1990s
- OTC CM major category in pharmacy
- IM specialist pharmacists??
Exploring the Integration of Complementary Medicines into Australian Pharmacy Practice with a Focus on Different Practice Settings and Background Knowledge

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Lesley A. Braun, Monash University
Jenny M. Wilkinson, Charles Sturt University
Ondine Spizer, Alfred Hospital
Michael Bailey, Monash University
Susan Poole, Alfred Hospital
Michael Dooley, Alfred Hospital
Pharmacists use of CM products (n=736)

- Hospital pharmacists: 58%
- Community pharmacists: 80%
National Pharmacist survey (n=736)

- Over 80% of the total sample strongly agreed or agreed that
  - ‘Customers are now expecting more information about CMs from their pharmacist than 5 years ago’
  - ‘pharmacists have a professional responsibility to counsel customers about CMs’
  - ‘pharmacists should play a greater role in providing customers with safety and drug interaction information about CMs’.

- 76% thought it was very important for under-graduate pharmacists to learn about evidence-based CMs

- 85% themselves were interested in further training.
Why aren’t pharmacists integrating CM products?

Figure 2: Factors preventing pharmacists from recommending CM products (up to 3 possible responses)
Beneficial interactions – Integrative medicine solutions
Potential patient benefits with integration of CM + pharma medicines

- 1. Reduced drug side effects
  - E.g. Probiotics preventing antibiotic-induced diarrhoea

PROBIOTICS IN THE PREVENTION OF ANTIBIOTIC-ASSOCIATED DIARRHEA IN CHILDREN: A META-ANALYSIS OF RANDOMIZED CONTROLLED TRIALS

HANIA SZAJEWSKA, MD, MARC RUSZYŃSKI, MD, AND ANDREJ RADZIKOWSKI, MD

Objectives To systematically evaluate the effectiveness of probiotics in preventing antibiotic-associated diarrhea (AAD) in children.

Study design The following electronic databases up to December 2005, in any language, were searched for studies relevant to AAD and probiotics: MEDLINE, EMBASE, and The Cochrane Library. Only randomized controlled trials (RCT) were considered for study inclusion.

Results Six placebo-controlled, RCTs (766 children) were included. Treatment with probiotics compared with placebo reduced the risk of AAD from 28.5% to 11.9% (relative risk, RR, 0.44, 95% CI 0.25 to 0.77, random effect model). Preplanned subgroup analysis showed that reduction of the risk of AAD was associated with the use of Lactobacillus GG (2 RCTs, 307 participants, RR 0.3, 95% CI 0.15 to 0.6), S. boulardii (1 RCT, 246 participants, RR 0.2, 95% CI 0.07-0.6), or B. lactis & Str. thermophilus (1 RCT, 157 participants, RR 0.5, 95% CI 0.3 to 0.95).

Conclusions Probiotics reduce the risk of AAD in children. For every 7 patients that would develop diarrhea while being treated with antibiotics, one fewer will develop AAD if also receiving probiotics. (J Pediatr 2006;149:367-72)
Potential patient benefits with integration of CM + pharma medicines

2. Improved surgical outcomes

- E.g. CoQ10, fish oils, alpha lipoic acid, magnesium orotate before cardiac surgery

- Significantly reduced incidence of post-surgery atrial fibrillation and reduced 24h troponin I (cardiac muscle damage)
Original Article

Perioperative metabolic therapy improves redox status and outcomes in cardiac surgery patients: A randomised trial

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(Heart, Lung and Circulation 2010;19:584–591)
3. Improving tolerance to drug and reducing long-term side effects
   - E.g. Reducing the incidence of peripheral neuropathy caused by chemotherapy

  - 3 RCTs show adjunctive vitamin E significantly reduces incidence of peripheral neuropathy
    - Braun & Cohen, Herbs and natural supplements- an evidence based guide 3rd edt; 2010

  - Incidence ranges from 30-40% of patients receiving chemotherapy – can cause cessation of treatment and/or irreversible long-term damage
The role of an integrated approach

- To address particular health priorities which may not be currently addressed by their doctor
  - E.g. quality of life when not adequately addressed by drug therapies or surgery

- When conventional treatment concludes e.g. cancer
- When conventional treatment is ineffective or not effective enough
- To mitigate side effects of conventional medicine

- To maximise health and wellbeing
- As part of a preventative healthcare approach

- To be treated as a “whole person”
current & emerging models

- Current models in general practice/pharmacy
  - Informed GP/pharmacist integrating CM recommendations
  - Pharmacist referring CM enquiries to pharmacy assistant

- Emerging models:
  - Pharmacists/GPs employing naturopaths to provide CM
  - Pharmacists/GPs collaborating with naturopaths

**Employment of Naturopaths in the Pharmacy Setting**

Eighteen percent (n=95) of the 525 community pharmacists reported that their pharmacy currently employs a naturopath. Of these community pharmacists, 64% (n=63) described the service provided by naturopaths as valuable, whereas 3% (n=3) reported it was not. Approximately half of the community pharmacists (51%, n=261) stated they would consider employing a naturopath.
Integrative medicine is here to stay and will only get BIGGER.

The safest & most effective recipes for good health must use quality ingredients & be based on good information and advice & sometimes ...professional input.