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**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF  
ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE IN THE MEDICAL SYSTEM  
AND MENTALITY OF THE POPULATION OF  
MOROCCO AND LEBANON**

**Ivanchenko Svitlana**

Ph.D., lecturer

**Alya Jerade**

**Basma Ouardi**

Students of Group 19 – 6<sup>th</sup> course  
Kharkiv national medical university  
Kharkov, Ukraine

Medical treatments that are considered alternative to traditional treatments are called alternative medicine. People also refer to it as "integrative," "complementary" medicine when applied in conjunction with conventional medical treatment but isn't considered as a standard treatment in itself

There are many major groups or categories of complementary or alternative medicine (CAM). Generally, whole medical systems are systems, which focus on disease, diagnosis, and treatment. Some of these systems include: firstly, The Ayurvedic system of medicine uses diet, herbs, meditation, yoga, massage, and internal cleansing. Secondly, homeopathy according to the theory that substances in large doses that cause illness can cure the same illness when given in very small doses. Small doses are thought to activate the body's natural healing mechanisms. Thirdly, the principles of naturopathy are based on the idea that the power of nature can heal disease. Among the practices utilized: acupuncture, medicinal herbs, qi gong, diet, and massage. Fourthly, mind-body techniques utilize the principle that mental and emotional factors influence physical health. Many of these methods are considered mainstream because there is scientific evidence showing the benefits of these methods. For example, Biofeedback, guided imagery, hypnotherapy (hypnosis), meditation, including mindfulness, relaxation techniques. Fifthly, in biologically based practices, the body is detoxified with specific dietary regimens (such as macrobiotics, paleo, Mediterranean, and low carbohydrate diets). Biochemistry, botanical medicine, natural products as well as chelation therapy are also used. Sixthly, as part of the manipulation and body-based therapies, body manipulation is used to treat various conditions such as chiropractic as a means of maintaining or repairing health by balancing the nervous system to the spine [1].

The second area of treatment is osteopathic manipulation, which is a set of practical methods used by osteopaths to analyze, diagnose and treat patients. It is believed that this increases blood flow to the affected area, which helps to improve healing in this area. Massage can reduce swelling, relieve pain and relieve spasms. Energy therapy (vitalistic concepts) is also known, based on the theory that subtle energies exist inside and around the human body (biofield). Therefore, the impact on acupuncture points can change the circulation of the main vital force [2].

**The aim of our study** was to conduct a comparative analysis of the place of alternative medicine in the structure of the medical system of Morocco and Lebanon

**Materials and methods:** With the help of a computerized database querying, we conducted an extensive literature search respecting our integration criteria. We performed this bibliographic research using the following search engines available over the Web: Google Scholar, PUBMED, Sciencedirect, Current Content Connect, SCOPUS, SPRINGER LINK, GLOBAL PLANTS, Cochrane Library and SCIRUS. For the analysis of data gathered, quali-quantitative analyzes have been performed. In addition, 86 Moroccan citizens aged 34 to 76 were interviewed about their experience in using alternative therapies.

**Discussion.** According to the literature Morocco is one of the countries that still uses such treatments as a traditional practice. Several studies have shown that the terms "traditional medicine" and "complementary medicine" are used interchangeably in Morocco. It refers to a broad range of healthcare practices that are not part of the country's own tradition and that are not incorporated into the dominant healthcare system. Approximately one-quarter of the Moroccan population relies solely on traditional medicine, according to the National Observatory of Human Development. Herbalists, midwives, clairvoyants, scorers, and sherifas are commonly known as traditional healers. Women called sherifas and men known as sherifs are believed to possess healing abilities because they descend from prophet Muhammad 's family. Various forms of alternative and complementary medicine are available, ranging from luxury spa centers to local practitioners [3].

According to a survey of 100 patients from Morocco, 46 patients confirmed that they are using alternative medicine. Of these, 24% (n = 11) used herbal medicine, 13% (n = 6) medotherapy, 37% of patients were treated with religious rituals (n = 11), special diets 22% (n = 10), acupuncture methods and spiritual practices were used by 6% of the respondents (n = 10). It should be noted that the use of two or more methods together or sequentially was noted by 93% of the respondents (n = 42). At the same time, they received medicinal herbs from a herbalist or traditional healer. The sociodemographic characteristics showed that women use medicinal plants slightly more than men, the illiterate people use the medicinal plant the most, and old people have more information about the medicinal plants than the new generations [4].

According to the results of a literary search on 63 published articles, 905 species of medicinal plants that are used in alternative medicine are growing on the territory of Morocco. The dominant families were ASTERACEAE (111 species) followed by the FABACEAE (77 species), LAMIACEAE (75 species) and APIACEAE (46 species). The plant species listed are used to cure several public ailments. The digestive ailments

represented the most important category (494 species) followed by dermatological diseases (407 species), diabetes (315 species) and urinary diseases (277 species) [5].

The role of alternative medicine in the Lebanese healthcare structure has grown significantly in recent years. Now that Lebanon is in the midst of an economic crisis, many modern medicines are not sold in pharmacies and people are trying to use alternative methods of treatment instead of modern medicines.

According to the research carried out by means of questionnaires through face-to-face interviews and a nationally representative sample of 1,475 Lebanese adults, the prevalence of alternative medicine use was 29.87%, with "traditional herbs" being the most commonly used (75%). Two out of five respondents indicated that they use it as an alternative to traditional treatments, and only 28.4% of users told their doctor about using CAM. CAM use was significantly associated with higher income, presence of a chronic disease, and lack of access to needed health care. Lower odds of CAM use were observed among older adults and those with a higher education level [6].

A total of 333 T2DM patients completed the survey (response rate: 94.6%). Prevalence of CAM use since diagnosis with the disease was 38%. After adjustment, CAM use was significantly associated with a "married" status, a longer duration of T2DM, the presence of disease complications, and a positive family history of the disease. Folk foods and herbs were the most commonly used CAM followed by natural health products. One in five patients used CAM as alternative to conventional treatment. Only 7% of CAM users disclosed the CAM use to their treating physician. Health care practitioners were the least cited (7%) as influencing the choice of CAM among users.

Similar findings were obtained in a study on the use of CAM techniques among patients with diabetes mellitus 2 living in Beirut, Lebanon. During face-to-face interviews, participants completed a questionnaire that was divided into three sections: socio-demographic, characteristics of diabetes, and types and ways of using CAM. Descriptive statistics, univariate and multivariate logistic regression analyzes were used to assess the prevalence and correlates of CAM use, and whether the use was complementary or alternative to conventional medicine. The main finding in this study, CAM use, was defined as CAM use at least once since the diagnosis of T2DM. A total of 333 patients with T2DM took part in the survey (response rate: 94.6%). The prevalence of CAM use since the diagnosis of the disease was 38%. After adjustment, CAM use was significantly associated with "married" status, longer duration of T2DM, complications, and a positive family history of the disease. Folk products and herbs were used most often, followed by natural health products. Every fifth patient used CAM as an alternative to traditional treatment. Only 7% of CAM users told their healthcare provider about using CAM. Practitioners were mentioned the least (7%) as influencing the choice of CAM among users [7].

Patients with lung cancer are increasingly seeking CAM to improve their physiological and psychological well-being. A study that interviewed 150 lung cancer patients attending the Basil Cancer Institute at the American University of Beirut Medical Center [8]. Participants completed a questionnaire addressing sociodemographic characteristics, lung cancer condition, and use of CAM. The main outcome of interest was "use of any CAM therapy since diagnosis." Prevalence of



CAM use was 41%. The most commonly used CAM modality among study participants was "dietary supplements/special foods." Results of the multiple logistic regression analyses showed that CAM use was positively associated with Lebanese nationality and paying for treatment out of pocket and was negatively associated with unemployment and having other chronic diseases. About 10% of patients used CAM on an alternative base, 58% did not disclose CAM use to their physician, and only 2% cited health professionals as influencing their choice of CAM. This study revealed a prevalent CAM use among lung cancer patients in Lebanon, with a marginal role for physicians in guiding this use.

These many sorts of alternative medicine that we just discussed can offer a variety of advantages and disadvantages for alternative medicine. Alternative medicines are more helpful for long-term health problems that don't respond well to modern medicine, which is one of the benefits of alternative medicine. Analyzing the literary sources, it becomes obvious that the most common type of treatment in both Morocco and Lebanon is herbal medicine. Herbs have fewer side effects and may be safer in the long term. There are little negative effects of removing nightshade vegetables from the diet, limiting white sugar consumption, and adding basic herbs to the diet. Furthermore, unlike pharmaceutical drugs, most herbal medicines are well tolerated by patients and have fewer unintended consequences. Another advantage of herbal medicine is its low cost. Herbs are much less expensive than prescription medications. Prescription medicines are significantly more expensive due to the costs of research, testing, and marketing. Herbs are less expensive than pharmaceuticals. Finally, another advantage of herbal medicines is their accessibility. Herbs are available without a prescription, and some, like peppermint and chamomile, can be grown at home. Herbs may be the only treatment available to the majority of people in some remote parts of the world. Many people are drawn to the ease with which herbs can be obtained. They are frequently used as a preventative measure in Traditional Chinese Medicine and Ayurvedic medicine. On the other hand, there are some disadvantages to alternative medicine, such as the fact that mainstream medicine still reigns supreme for sudden, serious illnesses. An herbalist cannot treat serious trauma, such as a broken leg, nor can he heal appendicitis or a heart attack as effectively as a conventional doctor using modern diagnostic tests, surgery, and drugs. Furthermore, modern medicine is far more effective than herbal or alternative remedies in treating unexpected illness and injuries. Herbal therapies might also interact with medicines, which is another downside of herbal medicine. Because some herbs may induce adverse reactions. Almost all herbs come with a warning, and several, such as Valerian and St. John's Wort, which are used to treat anxiety, can interact with prescription medications like antidepressants. Herbs are medicines, and much like pharmaceuticals, they have advantages and disadvantages. Visiting a physician for the accurate diagnosis, consulting an herbalist for the proper herb and dose, and accepting modern medicine when it makes the most practical sense may be the best of all possible worlds for individuals who desire to utilize alternative and complementary therapies.

It should be noted that for the population of Morocco, unlike Lebanon, it is precisely alternative medicine that is traditional. It is used by 80% of the population in concert with modern medicine. The decision to go to the fqih and the herbalist depends

on such factors as cost, convenience, beliefs, personal prestige of the practitioner, and a person's own self-esteem. The majority of times, a traditional practitioner will be chosen over the medical system. The positive aspects of traditional medicine include such factors as similarities in background, culture and language between the practitioner and the patient; care is provided in patients' homes and the cure includes seeking a balance to any discords between health and disease. Health is perceived as a balance between the person's physical, mental, emotional, moral and social well-being. The Moroccan pharmacopeia is well-known to the people, and only has a few dangerous products. However, there are some negative aspects to traditional medicine. The concept of causality has not been refined and often misses the diagnosis; exact forms of measurement and administration are being lost and popularization or the ritualization of a medicine has made its use become too common/

**As a conclusion**, investigations on complementary and alternative treatments may not always fulfill the most stringent effectiveness and safety standards. While certain alternative therapies have been proven to be successful in treating specific illnesses, many investigations have found them to be ineffective or inconsistent. Furthermore, because many therapies are untested or have not been well-studied, the first option should always be mainstream modern medicine, which is based on science and research, and alternative medicine should be used as a supplement to get better treatment results.

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