

**The Chinese University of Hong Kong  
The Nethersole School of Nursing  
CADENZA Training Programme**

**CTP 003: Chronic disease management  
and end-of-life care**

**Web-based Course for  
Professional Social and Health Care Workers**

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# Chapter 5

## Integrating Alternative and Conventional Therapies in Chronic Disease Management





# Lecture Outline


- Brief description of *chronic disease*
- Definitions of *conventional therapy*, *alternative therapy* and *complementary therapy*
- The reasons for using complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) for chronic diseases
- Discussion on commonly used CAM
- Benefits and risks of alternative therapy and integration with conventional therapy
- Future trend for *integrative therapy* in the management of chronic diseases

# Chronic Disease


The word “**chronic**” is often used in relation to **time**.

Roberts in 1955 defined chronic disease as “a disease or impairment requiring a **continuous** or **prolonged** period of care of at least 30 days acute hospitalisation or 3 months of medical supervision and/or rehabilitation in another caretaking setting.”

Roberts, D. W. (1955)

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- Although it may not be solely time-specific , “chronic” is a condition that:
    - is usually long term
    - cannot be cured, irreversible
    - requires ongoing supervision and care
    - requires new self-care approach
    - may affect physical, emotional, socioeconomic, and spiritual well-being of both the clients and the clients’ families

Eliopoulos, C. (1999)

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- Since chronic diseases may be lifelong, the goal of management is therefore much different from that of acute diseases and the care plan must be comprehensive enough to care for the person over his/her whole life.



# Management of Chronic Diseases

- Aims:
  - effectively manage the disease
  - develop and stimulate the body's own healing abilities
  - prevent complications
  - achieve the highest possible quantity and quality of life
  - die in peace, comfort, and dignity

Eliopoulos, C. (1999)

Whether the disease is acute or chronic,  
**conventional therapy** is usually the **first  
choice** of treatment.









# Conventional Therapy

- Generally accepted and used to treat certain types of disease
- Based on evidence-based research
- Also called *conventional treatment*

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- Conventional therapy is often described as:
    - fast
    - disease-oriented
    - using pharmacological drugs
    - assisted by many high-technology devices
  - May be beneficial in many acute diseases, but effectiveness uncertain for chronic illnesses.

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- In view of this, people are inclined to seek **alternative therapies** to relieve pain and to rid themselves of chronic discomfort.
  - Complementary and alternative medicine (**CAM**) is therefore becoming more popular in many countries.



# More Concise Definitions for CAM from The National Institutes of Health (NIH)

**Complementary** medicine is used together with conventional medicine.

**Alternative** medicine is used in place of conventional medicine.


**Integrative** medicine combines treatments from conventional medicine and CAM and is supported by evidence-based safety and effectiveness.



# Reasons to choose CAM


- beneficial and effective for the condition
- personal comfort
- confidence in the chosen CAM
- consistent with values and spiritual and cultural belief systems.
- able to incorporate the practice into own lifestyle
- cost effective
- easily available

Eliopoulos, C. (1999)



CAM is often used for chronic diseases such as back problems, allergies, fatigue, arthritis, headaches and neck problems.

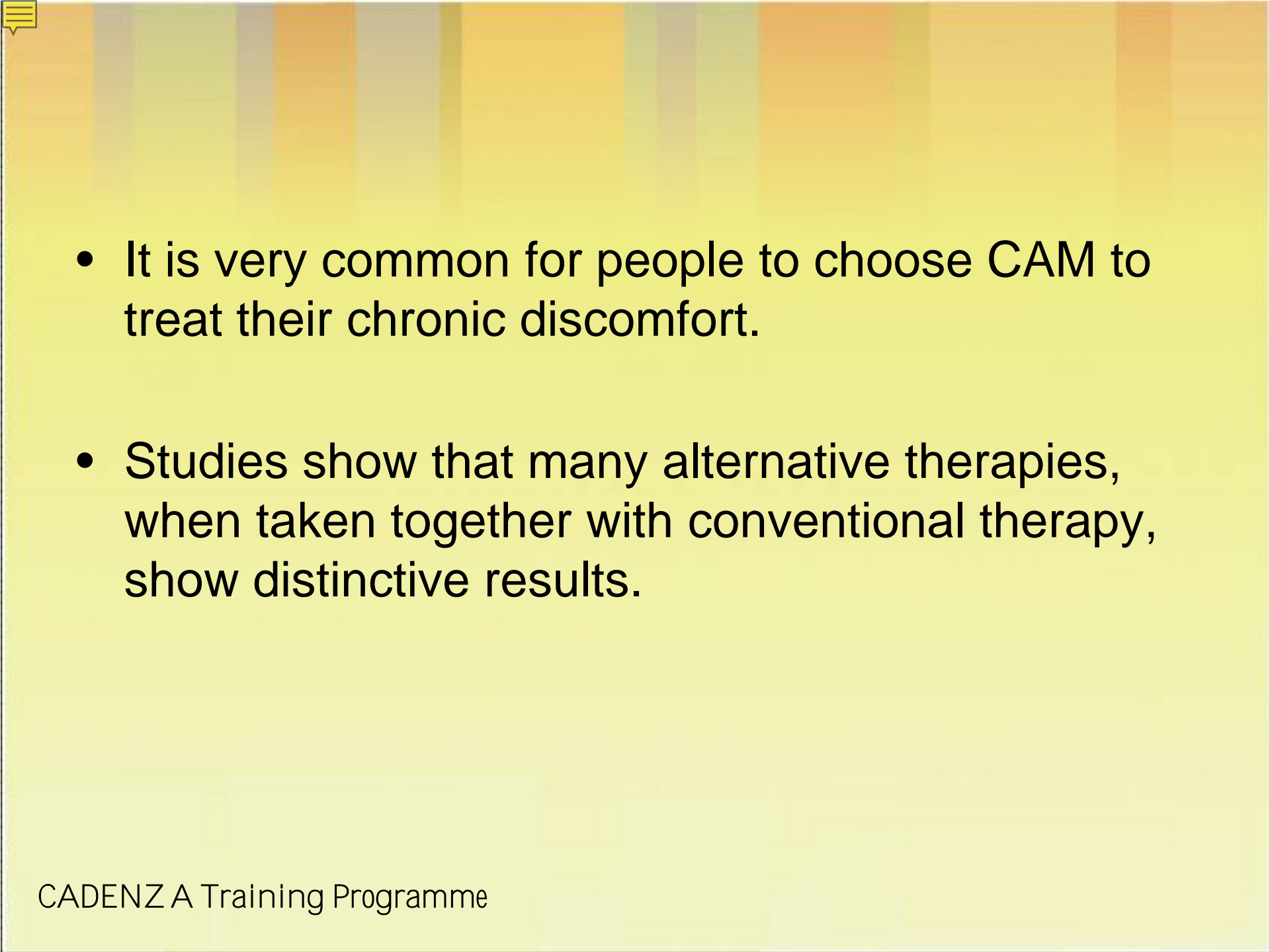
Eisenberg, D. M., & et al. (1998).



The National Institutes of Health (NIH), the U.S. medical research agency, classifies CAM into 5 categories:

- Ø mind-body therapies
- Ø alternative systems of care
- Ø biological-based therapies
- Ø manipulative and body-based systems
- Ø energy therapies

Synder, M. and Lindquist, R. (Eds.). (2002)

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- It is very common for people to choose CAM to treat their chronic discomfort.
  - Studies show that many alternative therapies, when taken together with conventional therapy, show distinctive results.







# Rhythmical massage therapy in chronic disease : 4-year prospective cohort study

**Objective:** To study clinical outcomes in patients receiving rhythmical massage therapy for chronic diseases.

**Design:** Prospective 4 year cohort study.

**Participants:** 85 outpatients referred from medical practices received rhythmical massage therapy.

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- In this study, most common indications were:
    - musculoskeletal diseases (back and neck pain) and
    - mental disorders (depression and fatigue)
  - Median disease duration: 2 years
  - Median no. of rhythmical massage therapy sessions :12
  - Median therapy duration : 84 days

- 
- Results: **All improved significantly** between baseline and all subsequent follow-ups, and maintained improvement until last follow-up.
  - Conclusion:  
Patients receiving rhythmical massage therapy were **less** likely to have long-term chronic disease **symptoms** and they tended to have **a better quality of life**.

Harald, J. Hamre, et al. (2007)



# Traditional Chinese Medicine

- In Hong Kong, the most well known CAM is Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM).
- Today, TCM is not only believed in by older people in Hong Kong, it is also embraced by younger generations.
- Hospitals and universities operate TCM clinics with different specialties.

# Traditional Chinese Medicine

- **TCM** includes a range of traditional medical practices originating in China.
- **TCM practices** include theories, diagnosis and treatments such as herbal medicine, acupuncture and massage.
- **TCM theories** derive from many sources including theory of yin-yang, the Five Phases, the human body channel system, zang fu organ theory and others.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/traditional\\_Chinese\\_medicine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/traditional_Chinese_medicine)

# TCM Practices

Include:

- Chinese herbal medicine
- Acupuncture and moxibustion
- Die-da or Tieh Ta
- Tuina – massage therapy
- Qigong
- Tai chi chuan
- Mental health therapy
- Cupping, such as Ba Guan



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/traditional\\_Chinese\\_medicine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/traditional_Chinese_medicine)

# TCM Practises

- Click the following website to see an overview of Chinese medicine:

<http://www.webmd.com/balance/tc/chinese-medicine-topic-overview>



# TRUE STORIES

65 year old lady complained of ankle pain and fell two times in the year before she began practicing Tai Chi. Found to have less ankle pain and could walk more steadily after practicing Tai Chi everyday in the morning for six months.

A 71 year old man walked with major assistance after stroke. After starting acupuncture together with physiotherapy, the rehabilitation progress was reported as good and fast in the case conference in the Day Hospital.

80 year old man suffered from chronic bone pain for several years and found mild relief using painkillers. Felt much relieved after receiving Tuina twice weekly.



# Video Show

- Traditional Chinese medicine is also being practiced in other countries and is becoming popular.
- An interesting video shows how Tuina is being practiced in United Kingdom:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CeHMjfnfc\\_E](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CeHMjfnfc_E)



# Integration of Chinese and Western medicine

- People usually use conventional Western medicine in acute situations and in addition use Chinese medicine to maintain strength and health.
- In China, an integrative medicine approach can be found in a cancer hospital in Shanghai. Inpatients are treated by radiation therapy and western medicine together with a herbal formula.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/traditional\\_Chinese\\_medicine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/traditional_Chinese_medicine)



# Acupuncture

- Another kind of TCM commonly used in Hong Kong
- Common treatment that scientific researchers in other countries focus on
- World Health Organisation (WHO), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the American Medical Association (AMA) agree that acupuncture is relatively safe

# News about acupuncture


The following newspaper clippings describe the effectiveness of acupuncture in certain diseases.

Oriental daily( 東方日報 )3/Sep/2010(Fri)

[http://orientaldaily.on.cc/cnt/news/20100903/00176\\_066.html](http://orientaldaily.on.cc/cnt/news/20100903/00176_066.html)

Metro News (都市日報) 19/Aug/2005(Fri)

<http://www3.hku.hk/chinmed/city/issue82.pdf>

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- Acupuncture is a procedure in which practitioners insert needles in multiple vectors in the body.
  - Some scientists believe that it triggers the release of the body's natural painkillers, therefore it can relieve chronic pain.
  - Some neuroimaging research suggests that the needle points may have distinct effects on cerebral activity in specific areas.

National Diabetes Information Clearhouse (2008).


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- WHO indicates several diseases suitable for acupuncture:
    - common cold
    - rheumatoid arthritis
    - sciatica and lumbar pain
    - constipation
    - headache
    - nocturnal enuresis
    - cataract

Longevity Centre of Classical Chinese Medicine (2008)

# Acupuncture

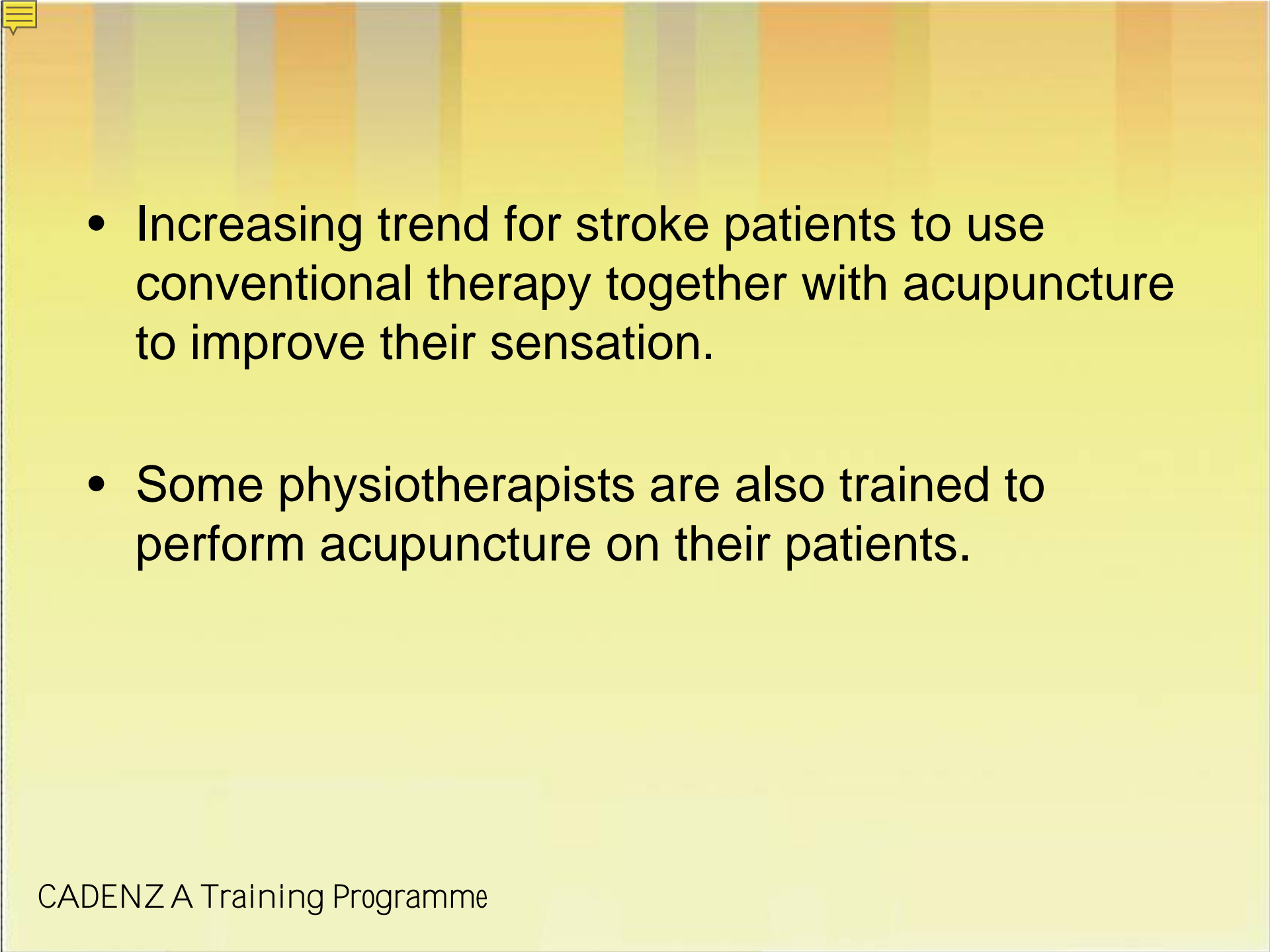
- Click the following website to see the acupuncture directory:

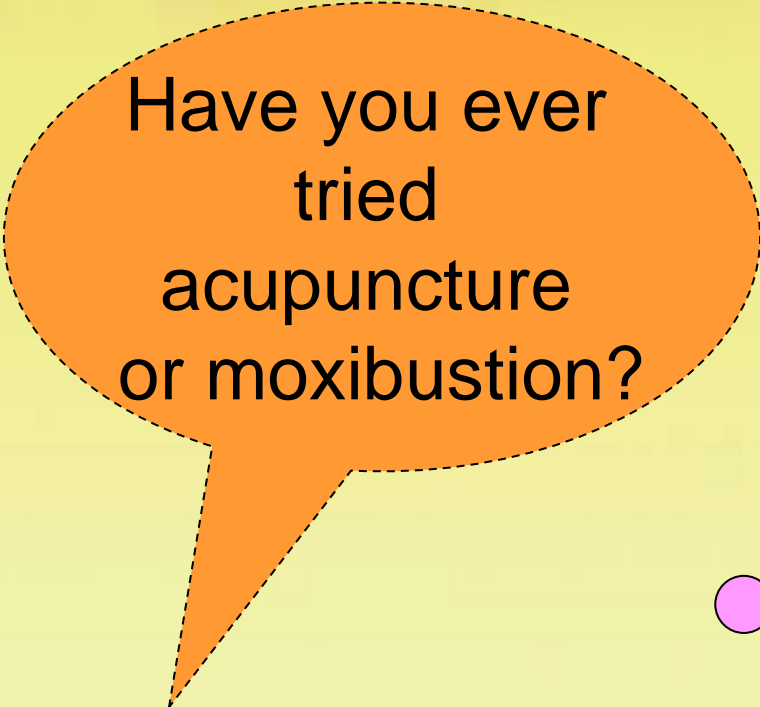
<http://www.webmd.com/pain-management/acupuncture-directory>

- 
- NIH Consensus Panel gives clear evidence for the efficacy of acupuncture in treating postoperative and chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting, and it appears helpful in low back pain, stroke rehabilitation, etc.
  - It may be an effective adjunctive therapy for different pain conditions.
  - It is commonly used in stroke rehabilitation.


National Institutes Of Health (1997)



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- Increasing trend for stroke patients to use conventional therapy together with acupuncture to improve their sensation.
  - Some physiotherapists are also trained to perform acupuncture on their patients.

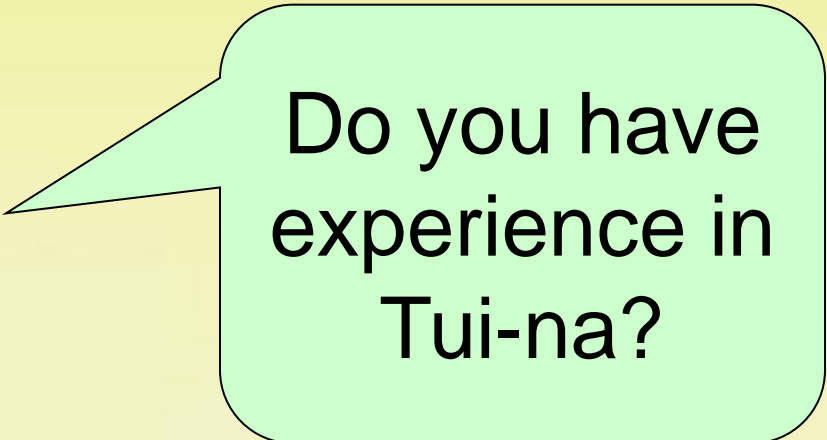


Have you ever  
tried  
acupuncture  
or moxibustion?



Have you  
ever taken  
any Chinese  
herbs?


**Just Ask yourself**




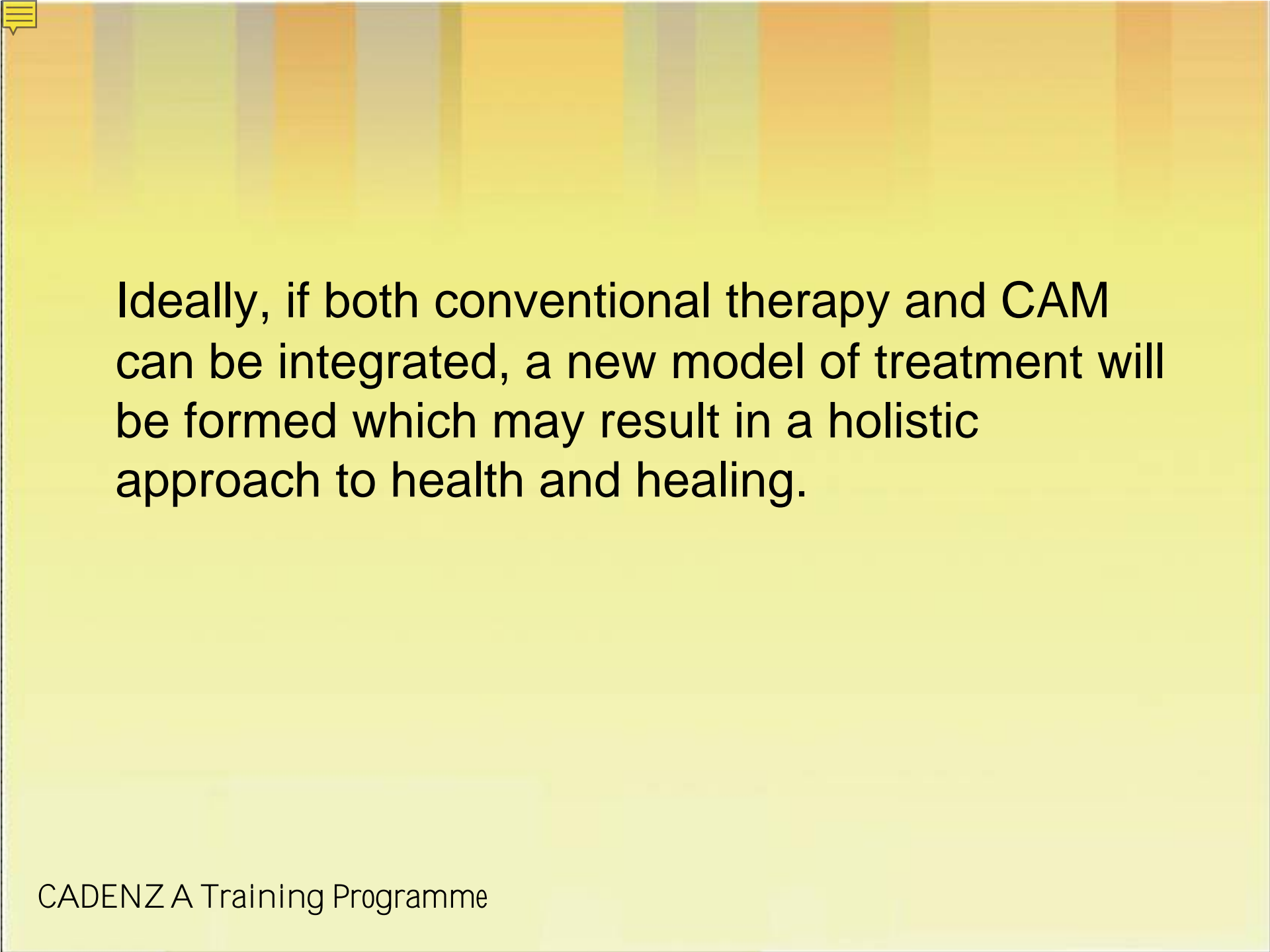
Do you have  
experience in  
Tui-na?

- It is interesting to find that people of different ages have different preferences in choosing CAM.
- The older generation prefers herbal medicines, Tu-nai, Tai Chi, etc.
- Younger adults may choose yoga, aromatherapy or naturopathy to maintain their current health status.



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- One of the reasons why older people have a special preference for CAM may be culturally related. They may have already suffered from various chronic diseases for many years and therefore try different alternative therapies to seek remedies.
  - Younger generations may use CAM to maintain their current health status and not for relieving chronic discomfort.

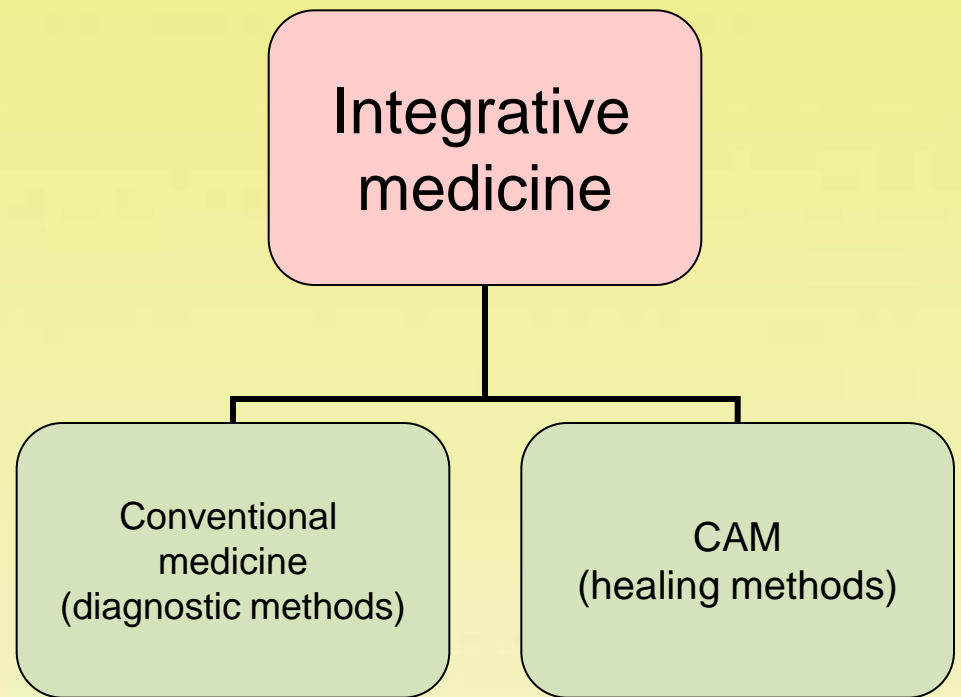
- 
- It is fair to say that CAM is well recognised in many countries and becoming more and more popular.
  - However, many studies show that people using CAM do not inform their physicians about their CAM treatments and vice versa.
  - Lack of consensus may result in unforeseeable adverse reactions



Ideally, if both conventional therapy and CAM can be integrated, a new model of treatment will be formed which may result in a holistic approach to health and healing.

# Integrative Medicine

- Integrating CAM into conventional medicine is called “integrative medicine”



Mann, D., et al (2004)




# Benefits of Integrative Medicine

There are numerous benefits for integrative medicine:

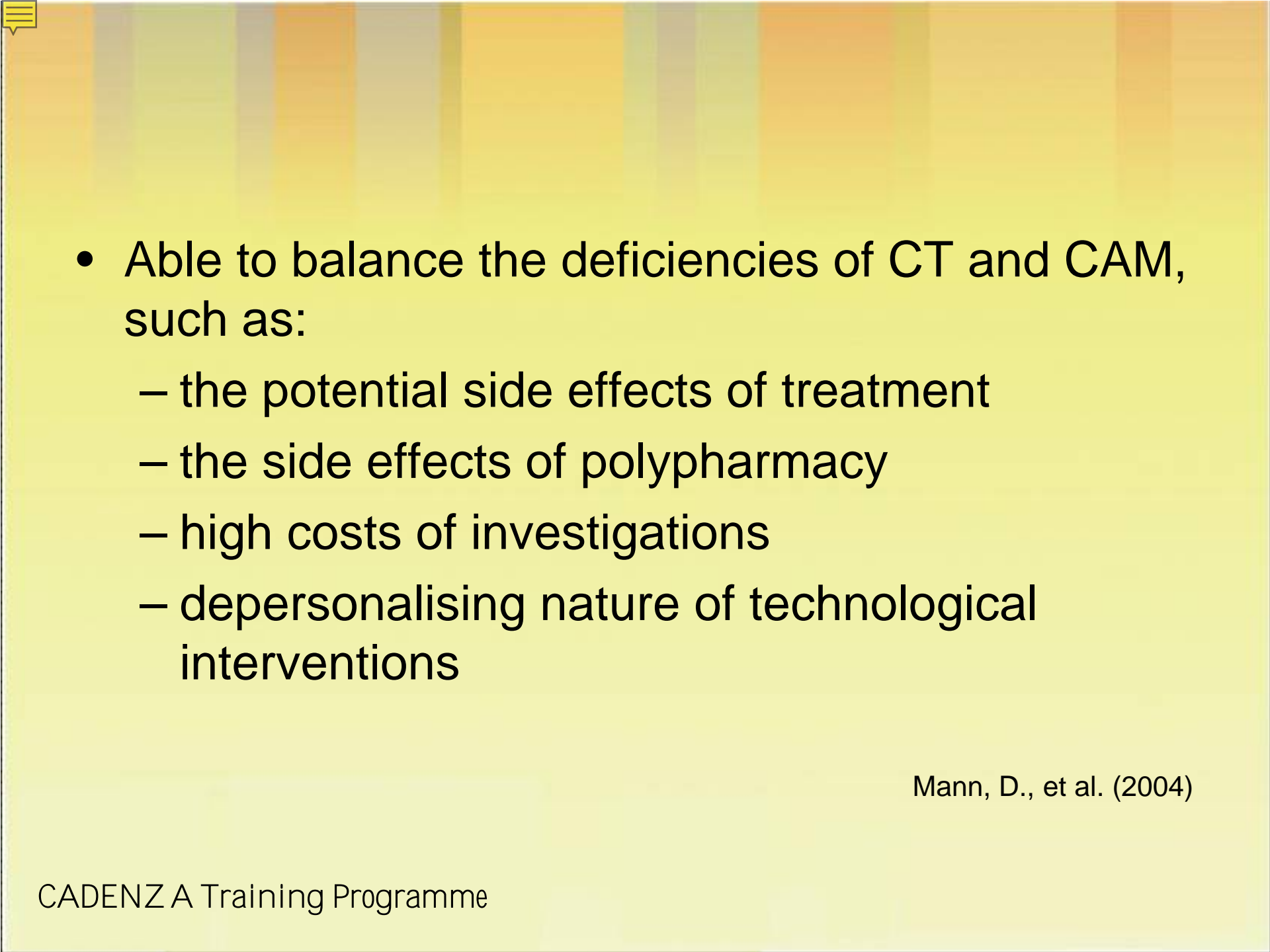
- potential for improved healthcare system
- expand treatment options
- improved patient and provider satisfaction
- improved therapeutic outcomes

Mann, D., et al. (2004)




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- Views the person as a whole, composed of the body, mind and spirit
  - Builds up general health status and not only relieves symptoms of the disease
  - The person takes active part in the treatment plan and promotes self care

Mann, D., et al. (2004)

- 
- Able to balance the deficiencies of CT and CAM, such as:
    - the potential side effects of treatment
    - the side effects of polypharmacy
    - high costs of investigations
    - depersonalising nature of technological interventions


Mann, D., et al. (2004)




Despite the increasing trend of using CAM , the process of integration is still very slow; possible reasons may be due to:

- lack of education about CAM
- limited information about CAM regarding clinical outcomes
- providers differ over belief in healing qualities
- CAM still lacking evidence of efficacy and safety
- lack of research and studies to document the success of integration of both CT and CAM


Mann, D., et al. (2004)

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- Lack of communication between providers of conventional therapy and CAM
  - Lack of common conceptual framework and corresponding clinical vocabulary for common communication
  - Potential hazards that remain unpredictable after integrating both

Mann, D., et al. (2004)




The perception of healthcare providers is also very important and greatly influences the progress of real integration



Practitioners may be confront with many questions, such as:

- differences in practice, culture and training
- how to ensure quality and standards
- how to provide funding and research
- how to fill knowledge deficit to minimise adverse reactions after integration, such as herb-drug interaction



In a mail survey conducted in Canada, 200 general practitioners were asked about their attitudes towards CAM.

**The findings were interesting...**



# Findings

- Most of them did **not** claim to know a great deal about CAM.
- Most believed it was important to know CAM but **not many of them** agreed that it was necessary for them to answer questions or give advice about CAM.


Cherniack, N., Cherniack, P. (eds) (2003)



# Future Trends for “Integrative medicine”

- Achieving “integrative medicine”
  - requires active, conscious effort by healthcare providers and medical science to sort out the evidence and application of various CAM for appropriate incorporation into existing health care systems.

Micozzi, M. S. (3 ed) (2006)

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- open communications among conventional providers, healthcare practitioners, patients and policy makers
  - open and respectful atmosphere and a balanced partnership
  - will to explore common health-related goals

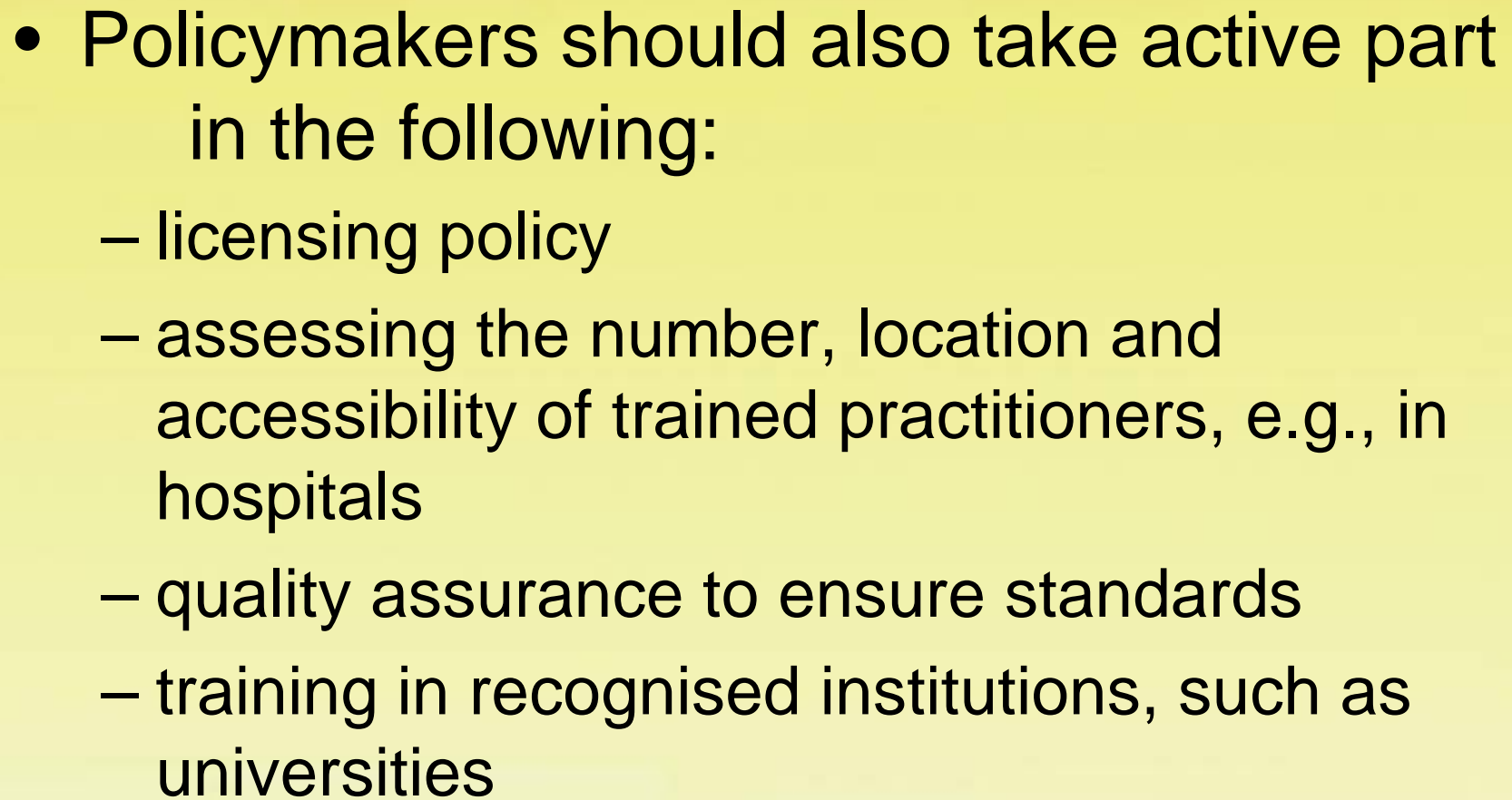
Mann, D., et al. (2004)



# Future Trend for “**Integrative** medicine”

- Ongoing research and studies to explore :
  - effectiveness of treatment after integration
  - satisfaction among healthcare providers, practitioners
  - patient motivation and satisfaction
  - cost-effectiveness
  - multidisciplinary guidelines for best practices

and lots more....

- 
- Policymakers should also take active part in the following:
    - licensing policy
    - assessing the number, location and accessibility of trained practitioners, e.g., in hospitals
    - quality assurance to ensure standards
    - training in recognised institutions, such as universities



## Example in Hong Kong (TCM + Western medicine)

- In Hong Kong, Chinese Medicine Clinics (CMC), have been established to increase the awareness and acceptance of TCM. The CMCs are provided through collaboration between the Hospital Authority, non-governmental organisations and local universities.



# Chinese Medical Clinics

- The CMCs were created to promote the development of “evidenced-based” Chinese medicine through clinical research.
- They provide senior Chinese medicine practitioners with the opportunity to train new graduates.



# The Chinese Medicine Council of Hong Kong

- The Chinese Medicine Council of Hong Kong has also been established.
- The Council is responsible for :
  - implementing regulation of Chinese medicine
  - ensuring health and consumers' rights
  - ensuring professional standards in Chinese medicine and the trade of Chinese medicines through self-regulation


For more details on the Chinese Medicine Council of Hong Kong, please go to the website: <http://www.cmchk.org.hk>



# Conclusion

- Both conventional therapy and CAM demonstrate lots of encouraging results for people in need.
- CAM is particularly popular in treating chronic illnesses.





Although integrating both of them is still a long way off, ideally ‘integrative medicine’ should be a **value-added** outcome and **beneficial** to the people in need. It also offers the prospect of a **prosperous** and **challenging** future for the medical world.

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