

Knowledge, Attitude, Influences and Use of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) among Chiropractic and Nursing students

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Abstract:

Introduction. Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) is becoming more widely used in the community however there are differences in knowledge and attitudes among and within the various health professions. Chiropractic and nursing students represent a future generation of two health profession groups who may have differing views on CAM.

Objectives. To investigate the knowledge, attitudes and beliefs of nursing and chiropractic students about CAM. To investigate the factors that influence their attitudes and beliefs and their likelihood of recommending CAM. To compare the findings between nursing and chiropractic students to determine similarities and differences.

Methods. A modified and pre-tested survey including a previously validated 10-item CAM Health Belief Questionnaire (CHBQ) was administered to nursing and chiropractic students at Murdoch University. Student's demographics were collected as well as other information regarding knowledge, attitudes, influences and use of CAM.

Results. 321 nursing and 227 chiropractic students responded with a 91% response rate. The CHBQ overall mean scores for nursing and chiropractic students were 47.6 and 47.4 out of possible 70 respectively, confirming positive attitudes toward CAM in both groups. Nursing and chiropractic students also demonstrated similar knowledge levels. Factors that were most influential in shaping both chiropractic and nursing students' attitudes and beliefs towards CAM were personal experience and the influence of external peers. Nursing students would not dissuade future patients from CAM, however chiropractic students were more likely to recommend CAM to their future patients

Conclusions. Nursing and chiropractic students demonstrate relatively positive attitudes and beliefs towards CAM despite, their limited knowledge concerning CAM modalities generally.