

The Status of CAM: Where Are We Now?

Merrijoy Kelner

Institute for Life Course and Aging
University of Toronto
222 College Street, Suite 106
Toronto Canada M5T 3J1
Telephone: 416-978-1787

Email: merrijoy.kelner@utoronto.ca
Website: www.utoronto.ca/CAMlab

*ACHRN Conference 2005, June 29-30
University of Nottingham, UK*

How I Became Interested in CAM And How It Changed My Life

- Teaching CAM in a medical school
- National study of chiropractors
- Toronto area study of CAM patients
- International social science symposium on CAM

Today a Plateau?

- Population percentages for Canada & US
- CAM not for everyone
- No quick fix
- Natural health products directorate
- Self-regulation?

Three Main Issues

1. Evaluation
2. Integration
3. Professionalization

Evaluation

- Crucial but how best to do it?
- RCTs – the gold standard **but** –
- Whole systems research
- New methods still to be developed
- Different approaches to evaluation

Integration in Education and Research

- Teaching CAM in medical schools
- Collaboration between CAM and medical researchers
- National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) in US – sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Integration in Practice

- **The Concept:**
Non-hierarchical, multi-disciplinary teams of medical and CAM practitioners
- **The Reality:**
 - Co-optation
 - Gatekeeping
 - Integrated health care settings
- **Artists' Health Centre**

Professionalization

- Not unique to CAM
- Tension between skepticism about professionals and demand for certification
- Studying the professions:
 1. Interactionist framework
 2. Social closure
 3. System of professions

CAMLab's Research on Professions

- Strategies for Professionalizing:
 1. Improving quality of education
 2. Elevating standards of practice
 3. Developing peer reviewed research
 4. Increasing group cohesion
- Resources for Professionalizing:
 1. Public support
 2. Political allies
 3. A critical mass
- Socio-Political Context

The Future?

- CAM is here to stay
- Routine use of dual and multiple approaches
- The Political Struggle
 - Costs of fitting into the system
 - Countervailing powers