

## APPLICATION OF TRADITIONAL MEDICINE AS A COMPANION TO MEDICAL TREATMENT

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### Abstract

This paper aims to examine the application of traditional medicine as a complement to medical treatment, focusing on its benefits, constraints and powerful integration strategies. Indigenous medicine has long been applied in various cultures to manage health and disease, and is increasingly accepted as a complement to contemporary medical treatment in the pursuit of whole health care. The research method included a literature review. The results showed that traditional medicine can have significant benefits in alleviating certain symptoms, improving patients' quality of life, and offering a more personalized approach that is in line with individual cultural values. Patients who combine traditional medicine with medical treatment often report improved inner and outer well-being. However, this study also found several barriers, including differences in scientific methods and validation, inadequate regulation, and a lack of formal training for traditional medicine practitioners. These barriers often stand in the way of effective and safe integration.

**Keywords:** Implementation, Traditional Medicine, Medical Treatment.

### Introduction

Health management has undergone significant development thanks to modern medical breakthroughs in the modern era, where new achievements and technologies support the improvement of medical services. However, traditional medicine still plays an important role in maintaining public health in many parts of the world.

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Traditional medicine includes various methods such as acupuncture, traditional medicine, therapeutic massage, and so on. These methods have been practiced for thousands of years and are still trusted by the community because they are considered safe and effective for treating various health complaints. (Zhou et al., 2023).

Both traditional and modern medicine have important contributions to make in maintaining the health and well-being of individuals. Traditional medicine, which is often based on hereditary knowledge and practices, offers a holistic approach to healing. This includes the use of medicinal plants, massage, acupuncture which have been shown to work for a variety of cases (Latifi et al., 2023).. The advantages include less chemical side effects and more affordable prices. In addition, traditional medicine is more accessible to rural communities who lack access to modern health services (Jain, 2020). (Jain, 2020).

On the other hand, modern medicine is supported by in-depth scientific research and advanced technology that allows for more precise diagnosis and more effective treatment of many serious diseases. Medical interventions such as vaccinations, antibiotics and surgeries have successfully treated many diseases that were once considered deadly. Modern medicine is also more appropriate for conditions that require emergency measures or hospitalization. A combination of traditional and modern medicine can provide a more comprehensive solution by utilizing the advantages of each to provide the best care for patients. (Lin, 2023).

In some countries, traditional medicine is even an integral part of the national healthcare system. For example, in China, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) has been integrated into the healthcare scheme, which includes the use of medicinal plants and other hereditary treatment techniques (Ma et al., 2024). Meanwhile, the modern medical treatment approach is scientific, using targeted diagnosis and precision treatment through drugs that have been proven beneficial through thorough clinical trials. These methods have been proven to be effective in curing a variety of complicated and serious diseases (Huang, 2022). However, modern medical treatment also has drawbacks, such as the side effects of drugs, relatively high costs, and limitations in treating chronic diseases along with psychiatric disorders.

Traditional medicine is often considered a suitable support to modern medical treatment as it offers a comprehensive and personalized approach that focuses on balancing the body holistically. (Liang & Huang, 2022).

Several studies have shown that the combination of traditional and medical treatments can improve treatment efficacy and reduce side effects. For example, administering acupuncture alongside medical therapy in treating chronic pain has yielded positive results. However, integrating the two methods of treatment is not free from obstacles. One of them is the different views on health and disease between the two methods. (Hongyan et al., 2023).. Medical treatment tends to be

mechanistic while traditional medicine emphasizes the balance of energy in the body. In addition, differences in regulations and treatment standards are also an obstacle to this integration. Strict standards in medical treatment are sometimes difficult to align with flexible practices in traditional medicine (Ostrowska et al., 2021)..

However, the potential benefits of integrating these two types of treatment are too great to ignore, as combining traditional and medical approaches is believed to lead to better patient outcomes.

In the country, traditional medicine such as herbal medicine and massage therapy have long been practiced and are part of a valued cultural heritage. However, research on the efficacy and safety of using traditional medicine as a support for medical treatment is still limited. (Esmaeili et al., 2022)..

The Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia has also released various rules and guidelines regarding the use of traditional and complementary medicine. This is a sign of the government's efforts to recognize and integrate traditional medicine into the health care system. (C et al., 2021).

One reason for this is the potential of traditional medicine in improving the quality of life of patients with chronic diseases, whereas modern medical treatment often only focuses on treating symptoms rather than a complete cure. (Liu & Liu, 2021).

The evidence-based medicine paradigm is also starting to be applied in traditional medicine, with more and more studies testing the effectiveness of various traditional medicine methods in clinical scenarios.

Based on this background, this literature review aims to assess the effectiveness of traditional medicine as a complement to medical treatment and identify the benefits and challenges in the integration of these two types of treatment.

## **Research Methods**

The study conducted in this research uses the literature research method, which is an approach used to collect, analyze, and interpret information in scientific literature. This method is often used to gain an in-depth understanding of a particular topic based on previous research. (Fadli, 2021); (Setiowati, 2016); (Syahran, 2020).

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Definition and Concept of Traditional Medicine**

Traditional medicine is a health practice that has endured for generations, rooted in local knowledge gathered through the experiences of ancestors. These methods often involve herbs, massage sequences, meditation, and spiritual rituals that have been passed down through generations. Although they have been practiced for hundreds of years in cultures across the globe, their effectiveness is

often anecdotal or scientifically unproven, and perhaps not fully validated through modern research. (Jafari et al., 2020).

Traditional medicine encompasses a variety of techniques that vary according to region and cultural setting. One of the most well-known is herbal medicine, which involves the use of plants or their extracts to treat various ailments. The leaves, roots, flowers, and seeds are often made into teas, external medicines, or capsules. (Velanovich, 2023). For example, Asian ginseng is believed to increase stamina, and ginger to ward off nausea. There is also the popular Chinese acupuncture, where thin needles are placed on specific energy points to stimulate natural healing. This method is often used to alleviate pain and various other health conditions. (Baibakov, 2020).

There is also Ayurvedic medicine from India that is holistic in nature, emphasizing the balance of body and mind through diet, meditation, and yoga. Traditional massage is also well known across cultures, such as Javanese massage, which is believed to improve blood circulation and reduce muscle stiffness. (Su & Tai, 2020). African tribal medicine sometimes involves shamans or healers who utilize herbs, rituals, and spiritualization to treat sufferers. Each treatment model reflects its own particularities and customs, offering a diverse perspective on maintaining health and curing disease (Saeidi et al., 2020). (Saeidi et al., 2021)..

In conclusion, traditional medicine is a healthcare system rich in cultural diversity and methods. Thanks to the knowledge passed down by our ancestors, it includes practices such as the use of medicinal plants, acupuncture, Ayurveda, traditional massage, and spiritual remedies. Although the effectiveness of some techniques has not been scientifically recognized, many people still trust traditional medicine to maintain health and cure various ailments due to its holistic approach and close connection with cultural heritage and local beliefs.

### **Definition and Concept of Medical Treatment**

Medical treatment is a healthcare practice based on science and research to diagnose, treat and prevent diseases and other medical conditions. It involves clinically proven advanced technologies, surgical procedures, synthetic drugs, physical therapies and more to achieve objectively measurable results. (Huang, 2022). Licensed physicians and medical personnel practice according to the standards and protocols of official health bodies to ensure patients receive safe, effective, and reliable care. (Fu, 2021).

Medical treatment includes various methods and techniques used to treat health problems based on verified scientific research. One common type is pharmaceutical drugs covering various categories such as antibiotics for bacterial infections, analgesics to relieve pain, anti-inflammatories to reduce inflammation, and antihypertensives to control high blood pressure. These medications can be administered in various forms such as pills, capsules, injections, or ointments, which

are usually prescribed by a doctor after a proper diagnosis. (Filippov & Evtushenko, 2021)..

Surgical procedures are also common, especially for conditions that cannot be treated with medication alone. Surgery varies from minor operations such as cyst removal to major operations such as organ transplants. Modern technology such as laparoscopic and robotic surgery allows for safer procedures with faster recovery for patients. In addition, there is also emergency surgery in critical circumstances to save lives such as heart attacks or accidents. (McDowell & Shiau, 2022).

Physical therapy is another form that focuses on restoring physical function and mobility. Therapy is particularly beneficial for patients who are injured, post-surgery, or have chronic conditions such as arthritis or stroke. Physical therapists use various techniques such as exercises, gentle tissue manipulation, as well as assistive devices to improve the patient's strength, flexibility, and coordination. (Bagheri et al., 2021). In addition, psychological therapy or counseling is often used to treat mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress with approaches such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, group therapy, and individual counseling (Wang et al., 2021). (Wang et al., 2021).

To summarize, medical treatment includes various methods to diagnose, treat and prevent health problems based on scientific evidence and verified research. Common types include the use of pharmaceutical drugs for various diseases, surgical procedures for more invasive interventions, and physical therapy to restore physical function and mobility. Psychological therapy or counseling also plays an important role in mental health disorders. With these various types, the goal of medical services is to provide safe, effective, and reliable care for patients.

### **Effectiveness of Traditional Medicine as a Companion to Medical Treatment**

Traditional medicine has been an integral part of the cultures of various countries for centuries as a natural solution to cure a wide range of ailments and improve whole-body fitness (Yang et al., 2024). Methods such as acupuncture, herbal medicine, and massage are sometimes regarded as useful alternatives or supports to mainstream medical treatment. One of the main reasons why traditional medicine is still popular is its holistic perspective, which looks at not only physical symptoms but also mental and emotional balance. For many people, it offers a more natural and less invasive way to aid the healing process. (Gerdfaramarzi et al., 2022)..

However, the effectiveness of traditional medicine as a complement to medical treatment has not really been proven through scientific research. While some methods, such as acupuncture, have shown positive results in certain clinical trials for conditions such as chronic pain and migraine, there are still many traditional medicine methods that require further research to determine their efficacy. (Mousavinejad et al., 2022).. Therefore, it is important for patients and doctors to always consider

scientific evidence and medical consultation before deciding to combine traditional medicine with conventional medical therapy.

The synergy between medical and traditional medicine can yield greater results if practiced carefully and under professional supervision. For example, patients undergoing cancer treatment may find relief through massage or certain herbs to reduce the side effects of chemotherapy, such as nausea and fatigue (Bozyel et al., 2020).. However, it is important that all traditional treatments followed are known to the treating physician to avoid potentially harmful interactions between drugs and herbs or other traditional methods (Akash et al., 2020). (Akash et al., 2020).

In conclusion, traditional medicine can be beneficial as a complement to medical treatment with a holistic approach and a focus on the patient's overall well-being. Despite their potential usefulness, it is important to always prioritize safety and effectiveness supported by scientific evidence. Consultation with medical experts is highly recommended so that traditional and medical treatments can go hand in hand without the risk of negative interactions. Thus, patients are able to experience the best benefits of both approaches and achieve better healing outcomes.

### **Advantages and Challenges**

Combining conventional and traditional medical therapies has become an important discussion in modern healthcare. There are many benefits to integrating these two different treatment approaches, such as providing a broader understanding of the patient's physical as well as mental well-being. (Babu & Navneet, 2020). One of the main advantages of traditional medicine is its holistic view, which looks at the patient as a whole rather than just the symptoms of the disease. Methods such as acupuncture, massage, and herbal medicine can help reduce stress, improve sleep, and strengthen the immune system. In addition, the natural ingredients used in traditional medicine are generally safer as they have less significant side effects. (Kolosova et al., 2021)..

This integration also has the potential to improve the quality of life of patients undergoing standard medical therapy. For example, previous studies have shown that massage and acupuncture can reduce chronic pain and nausea in cancer patients during chemotherapy. Traditional support may make patients feel more comfortable when facing invasive medical treatments. Of course, this needs to be discussed with medical personnel so that the two approaches do not interfere with each other. (Adegova et al., 2020)..

The biggest challenge in integrating these two systems is the difference in their basic concepts. Medical emphasizes scientific research to diagnose and treat disease. Traditional medicine, on the other hand, relies more on hereditary knowledge and empirical experience, which is difficult to measure objectively. This

makes it difficult to evaluate traditional methods for optimal use in a structured treatment framework. (Choopani et al., 2021)..

In addition, regulations and standards of practice differ between the two approaches. Many traditional methods have not been properly standardized by health institutions, while the lack of certification of traditional experts may pose a risk. (Estrada et al., 2024). Therefore, a framework is needed that ensures patient safety while allowing close cooperation between the two systems. With an open dialog and a clear framework, integration can be carried out to provide optimal benefits for treatment participants.

## **Conclusion**

The development of traditional medicine alongside the medical system shows great potential for achieving more holistic healthcare. Traditional medicine can offer alternative and supportive solutions to alleviate specific symptoms, improve patients' quality of life, and provide more personalized treatment options. This integration also reflects cultural values as well as individual preferences that tend to lean towards traditional methods due to family heritage or positive personal experiences.

However, research has also exposed significant challenges in such integration efforts. Differences in methods, scientific validation and regulation between traditional and medical medicine are major barriers. There are difficulties in proving the effectiveness and safety of traditional practices using modern scientific standards, which is essential to ensure patient protection. In addition, the lack of formal training and certification for traditional medicine practitioners may hamper professionalism and trust among conventional healthcare providers.

Therefore, to achieve effective and safe integration, a structured and collaborative approach is needed. The government and health institutions need to develop a clear regulatory framework to oversee and standardize the practice of traditional medicine. In addition, further research is needed to evaluate and document the benefits and risks of traditional medicine. Adequate education and training for practitioners of both fields is also essential to ensure efficient and quality coordination in patient care, so that both methods can complement each other and provide maximum benefits to public health.

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