

# Introduction to Integrative and Complementary Medicine

ENRH-108

**Course Directors:** Dr. Turya Nair, MD; Jessica McConahey; Heather Lanier; Valentina Harmjanz

**Faculty Sponsor:** Dr. Turya Nair, MD

**Department:** Family & Community Medicine

**Student Liaisons:** Jessica McConahey; Heather Lanier; Valentina Harmjanz

## **Requirements:**

Minimum participants for course to be conducted: 5 students

Maximum number of students per course (if applicable): Not applicable

## **Rationale:**

An ever-growing portion of the American population makes use of natural products, mind-body techniques, non-allopathic health practitioners and other forms of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) to support their own health and treat disease or illness. Sometimes these are complements to traditional care provided under physicians—but sometimes these modalities are used instead of Western medical practice due to concerns for side effects, invasiveness, or a desire to choose more natural, more affordable, or more culturally acceptable approaches. Meanwhile, an ever-growing body of medical literature on CAM approaches is now available, studying the safety and efficacy of these modalities, as well as how they can be integrated into allopathic medical practice.

The aim of this elective is to guide medical students through a broad tour of CAM modalities that is both cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary, to ensure a basic awareness of these approaches that can be valuable to clinical practice. Generating a safe space for patients to reveal their use of these modalities leads to shared decision-making and collaborative treatment plans that combine physician knowledge of the medical evidence with the patient's preferences for methods that reflect their values. Students will thus gain exposure to the field of Integrative Medicine, which weaves CAM therapies into traditional Western practice and is now a board-recognized specialty.

## **Learning Objectives:**

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- ≠ Define the terms integrative medicine and complementary and alternative medicine
- ≠ Introduce integrative medicine elements into routine history-taking as appropriate
- ≠ Incorporate spiritual history-taking elements and patient interaction as appropriate
- ≠ Demonstrate basic understanding of several commonly used and evidence-based CAM modalities that fall under the broad categories of herbals and supplements, mind-body medicine, energy medicine, alternative systems of medicine, and body-based modalities.
- ≠ Demonstrate awareness of current evidence-base, legal aspects and medical policies for use of CBD and medical marijuana
- ≠ Identify effects of the environment on health, including exposures through living conditions, workplace conditions, food consumption, cultural practices, and recreation
- ≠ Identify key patient populations in which use of integrative modalities may be high, and basic understanding of pertinent modalities to each (i.e., prenatal patients, children, chronic pain patients)

**Format:** 1-hour classes, 12 total sessions, Weekly online lunch talks on zoom using Faculty Sponsor's institutional zoom account.

**Student Evaluation: Yes**

Grades will be pass/fail. Attendance will be recorded and is required to receive credit for the course.

**Course Evaluation:**

Grading will be pass/fail. To receive transcript acknowledgment, students must: attend 10 of 12 participant hours and complete the online REDCap course evaluation form

**Schedule:**

Session order and dates/times subject to change based on speaker and sponsoring faculty availability.

**Session 1: Introduction – What is CAM?**

**Date: 8/23/21 12-1 PM**

A foundational lecture defining key terms including “integrative” and “complementary”, describe the broad categories of CAM modalities, demographic and statistical data about use of CAM modalities in the United States, and how to solicit key information about use of CAM from patients in clinical practice. Resources will also be provided for key evidence base sources about CAM modalities, as well as issues that problematize research in integrative medicine. Students will be invited to try incorporating questions about use of CAM into their history-taking during clinical encounters they may have after this session.

**Session 2: What do our osteopathic (DO) colleagues do?**

**Date: 8/30/21 12-1 PM**

An introduction to osteopathic medicine, its many potential uses, the evidence base for osteopathic therapy, providing resources for more education and training in osteopathic techniques for MDs. We will also discuss and dispel the bias that exists towards DOs in medical education and clinical practice. Based on current medical school guidelines/restrictions surrounding COVID-19 precautions, in-person iterations of this session may also include demonstration and teaching of a few basic osteopathic techniques.

**Session 3: Spirituality in history-taking and clinical care**

**Date: 9/13/21 12-1 PM**

This lecture will include the evidence base for inclusion of spiritual elements into history-taking as well as during key times in clinical care. This will include key acronyms to help practice soliciting a spiritual history, as well as how this can impact the patient-physician relationship and have therapeutic benefits for patients.

**Session 4: Introduction to Herbal Medicine**

**Date: 9/20/21 12-1 PM**

An introduction to key concepts around the use of herbal medicines and supplements for health and illness. Herbal concepts including product quality and source, synergy, dosing, and route of application will be explored, as well as appropriate “prescribing” or recommendation by a qualified practitioner. Common herbal home remedies that are easily accessible for common conditions (a “home kit”) will also be discussed as examples. Based on current medical school guidelines/restrictions surrounding COVID-19 precautions, in-person iterations of this session may also include a station for examining samples of herbal products and/or a demonstration preparing an herbal tincture or infusion.

**Session 5: CBD and Medical Marijuana**

**Date: 9/27/21 12-1 PM**

This session will present the evidence base and literature around this politically contentious area of therapeutics. The material will focus on current evidence and possible future areas of application for CBD and medical marijuana that are known through research, as well as providing an understanding of the current legal landscape for both CBD and marijuana in the state of Texas as it applies to patient use for medical conditions. *Our discussion of this topic will be restricted to clinical and therapeutic aspects, and will not endorse or refute any political perspectives or agendas as that is outside the scope of this elective.* Based on current medical school

guidelines/restrictions surrounding COVID-19 precautions, in-person iterations of this session may also include a station for examining samples of CBD products.

#### **Session 6: Introduction to Acupuncture**

**Date: 10/4/21 12-1 PM**

A brief history and philosophy of acupuncture within the context of Traditional Chinese Medicine, as well as an introduction to the modern practice and licensing for acupuncturists in the United States. We will discuss the current evidence base for clinical outcomes when used therapeutically for various conditions. Based on current medical school guidelines/restrictions surrounding COVID-19 precautions, in-person iterations of this session may also include a station for demonstration of acupuncture on student volunteers, easy acupressure techniques, and inspection of acupuncture needles.

#### **Session 7: Introduction to Mind-Body Medicine**

**Date: 10/11/21 12-1 PM**

An introduction to the field of mind-body medicine (including such practices as meditation, mindfulness, biofeedback, yoga, tai chi, qi-gong, and breathing techniques), and their therapeutic applications to many medical conditions for our patients, but also for ourselves as medical students and physicians engaged in a profession that entails multiple sources of significant stress within daily education and clinical practice. This session will include demonstration of techniques that are easy to incorporate into our lives, as well as practicing how to teach these techniques to patients, through peer-teaching.

#### **Session 8: CAM in Women's Health**

**Date: 10/18/21 12-1 PM**

This session will discuss key milestones in women's lives, including menses, pregnancy, labor and delivery, and menopause, which represent times when many women turn to CAM modalities to manage symptoms that may not be safely or fully managed by Western methods. Additionally, this session will introduce the important roles of midwives and doulas, who are often present during labor and delivery alongside physicians in the hospital, or who guide women through home births. Students will thus gain an understanding of these practitioners' roles and scope of practice, and how to collaborate and interface with these practitioners in their future practice.

#### **Session 9: CAM in Pediatrics**

**Date: 10/25/21 12-1 PM**

This session will discuss safe and evidence-based applications of CAM in pediatrics. Parents may want more "natural" remedies for their children, or be wary of side effects or invasiveness of Western interventions, and therefore turn to CAM modalities. Certain pediatric conditions may also benefit greatly from an integrative approach that emphasizes nutritional and non-pharmaceutical approaches that are within the scope of integrative medicine.

#### **Session 10: Chiropractic Medicine**

**Date: 11/1/21 12-1 PM**

This session will introduce the history and basic concepts around chiropractic approaches to health conditions, safety, and evidence base. Education, scope of practice, and what credentials to look for when seeking practitioners will also be discussed. Based on current medical school guidelines/restrictions surrounding COVID-19 precautions, in-person iterations of this session may also include a station for demonstration of chiropractic techniques.

#### **Session 11: Massage Therapy**

**Date: 11/29/21 12-1 PM**

This session will introduce the field of massage therapy as it applies to care of medical conditions, in addition to its wellness benefits. We will discuss the various types/schools of massage, the evidence base for incorporating massage therapy into inpatient and outpatient care, as well as what credentials to look for when seeking qualified

practitioners. Based on current medical school guidelines/restrictions surrounding COVID-19 precautions, in-person iterations of this session may also include a station for demonstration of massage techniques.

**Session 12: Environmental Medicine**

**Date: 12/13/21 12-1 PM**

This session will introduce a more in-depth understanding of how environment (home, work, climate, chemicals, radiation, sound, exposures, etc) can affect human health across one's lifespan living in the developed world. We will briefly touch on specific areas including "endocrine disrupting chemicals", plastics, gut health, microbiome, farming practices, organic vs non-organic, and food processing.