

Complementary and Alternative Medicine Journals: Towards Evidence-Based Ancient Medicine

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Abstract

Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) comprises a number of professional disciplines such as acupuncture, ayurvedic medicine, biofeedback, herbal medicine, and homeopathic medicine. The objective of this short communication was to present an overview of studies analyzing CAM journals found in PubMed. There were studies on Chinese authorship trend, ethical standards, three studies on content analysis and quality of natural product clinical trials in CAM journals, which provided limited preliminary evidence on the role of journals.

Keywords: Evidence-based ancient medicine; Evidence-based alternative medicine; Journals' analysis; Research trend; Publication trend.

Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) comprises a number of professional disciplines such as acupuncture, ayurvedic medicine, biofeedback, herbal medicine, and homeopathic medicine. The objective of this short communication was to present an overview of studies analyzing CAM journals found in PubMed.

Chinese authorship

Li *et al*[1] compared articles from three regions (the Mainland, Taiwan and Hong Kong) published in international CAM journals and found that the number of published articles from Mainland China and Taiwan increased significantly from 2000 to 2009, particularly since 2005. Small proportion of clinical trials and randomized controlled

trials from Chinese authors were published. The most popular journals for Chinese authors were Journal of Ethnopharmacology, American Journal of Chinese Medicine, Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine and Evidence-based Complementary and Alternative Medicine.

Ethical standards

Lim *et al*[2] evaluated reporting of ethical aspects (adherence to clinical guidelines, ethical approval from ethics committees, consent of the patient, declaration of conflict of interest, and declaration of funding for a study) and compared them between 21 articles in complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) journals and 43 articles in mainstream medical research journals. Only 62%, and 48% of CAM articles reported ethical approval, and patients' consent respectively, and it was higher among other journals. A similar trend was noted for conflicts of interests and sponsorship.

Content analysis

Morgan *et al*[3] organized the list of MEDLINE-indexed CAM journals into topical categories: Acupuncture, CAM (general), Chinese Medicine, Herbal/Plant/

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Schmidt *et al*[4] provided a detailed profile of CAM journals in Medline, and studied trends in publication practice between the years 1995 and 2000. There was increase in number of original articles from 1995 to 2000, and the number of clinical trials decreased by 4% between 1995 and 2000, and the number of surveys increased more than six times. Less positive and more negative articles were published in 2000 compared with 1995.

Coelho *et al*[5] performed a content analysis of 363 articles published in six PubMed-indexed CAM journals and found fewer clinical trials and more than half articles had positive outcomes in 2005 than in 2000 and 1995.

Quality of natural product clinical trials

Cochrane *et al*[6] compared the quality of 30 natural product clinical trials of which 15 were published in alternative medicine journals versus 15 in conventional medicine journals. 33.33% and 26.67% of articles were of low quality respectively. Two thirds of all trials had inadequate reporting of information relating to the study's methodology.

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product clinical trials in CAM journals, which provided limited preliminary evidence on the role of journals.

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