The Geographic Distribution of Complementary, Alternative, and Traditional Medicine in the United States in 2018

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Abstract : Most of what is known about complementary, alternative or traditional medicine (CATM) in the United States today is known from either the National Health Interview Survey a cross-sectional survey with a few questions or from small cross-sectional or cohort studies with specific populations. The broad geographical distribution in CATM use or providers is not known. For this project, we used geospatial cluster analysis to determine if there were clusters of CATM provider by county in the US. In this analysis, we used the National Provider Index to determine the geographic distribution of providers in the US. Of the 215,769 CAMT providers 211,603 resided in the contiguous US: Acupuncturist (26,563); Art, Poetry, Music and Dance Therapist (2,752); Chiropractor (89,514); Doula/Midwife (3,535); Exercise (507); Homeopath (380); Massage Therapist (36,540); Mechanotherapist (1,888); Naprapath (146); Naturopath (4,782); Nutrition (42,036); Reflexologist (522); Religious (2,438). ESRI® spatial autocorrelation was used to determine if the geographic location of CATM providers were random or clustered. For global analysis, we used Getis-Ord General G and for Local Indicators of Spatial Associations with an Optimized Hot Spot Analysis using an alpha of 0.05. Overall, CATM providers were clustered with both low and high. With Chiropractors, focusing in the Midwest, religious providers having very small clusters in the central US, and other types of CAMT focused in the northwest and west coast, Colorado and New Mexico, the great lakes areas and Florida. We will discuss some of the implications of this study, including associations with health, economic, social, and political systems.

Keywords : complementary medicine, alternative medicine, geospatial, United States

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