

Use of Alternative and Complementary Therapies in Patients with Chronic Pain in a Medical Institution in Medellin, Colombia, 2014

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Abstract : Alternative and complementary therapies constitute a vast and complex combination of interventions, philosophies, approaches, and therapies that acquire a holistic healthcare point of view, becoming an alternative for the treatment of patients with chronic pain. Objective: determine the characteristics of the use of alternative and complementary therapies in patients with chronic pain who consulted in a medical institution. Methodology: cross-sectional and descriptive study, with a population of patients that assisted to the outpatient consultation and met the eligibility criteria. Sampling was not conducted. A form was used for the collection of demographic and clinical variables and the Holistic Complementary and Alternative Medicine Questionnaire (HCAHQ) was validated. The analysis and processing of information was carried out using the SPSS program v.19. Results: 220 people with chronic pain were included. The average age was 54.7 ± 16.2 years, 78.2% were women, and 75.5% belonged to the socioeconomic strata 1 to 3. Musculoskeletal pain (77.7%), migraine (15%) and neuralgia (9.1%) were the most frequently types of chronic pain. 33.6% of participants have used some kind of alternative and complementary therapy; the most frequent were: homeopathy (14.5%), phytotherapy (12.7%), and acupuncture (11.4%). The total average HCAHQ score for the study group was 30.2 ± 7.0 points, which shows a moderate attitude toward the use of complementary and alternative medicine. The highest scores according to the type of pain were: neuralgia (32.4 ± 5.8), musculoskeletal pain (30.5 ± 6.7), fibromyalgia (29.6 ± 7.3) and migraine (28.5 ± 8.8). The reliability of the HCAHQ was acceptable (Cronbach's α : 0.6). Conclusion: it was noted that the types of chronic pain and the clinical or therapeutic management of patients correspond to the data available in current literature. Despite the moderate attitude toward the use of these alternative and complementary therapies, one of every three patients uses them.

Keywords : chronic pain, complementary therapies, homeopathy, acupuncture analgesia

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