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Original Research Article.

Prevalence and Pattern of Use of Complementary and Alternative Medicine by Patients with Headache Disorders in Madinah, Saudi Arabia

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ABSTRACT

Background: Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) is increasingly being used with the conventional treatment in headache disorders in other countries. No researches have been reported the prevalence of the use of the complementary and alternative medicine by patients with headache disorders In Madinah region, Saudi Arabia.

Methods: A Cross-sectional study was conducted in Madinah, Saudi Arabia where147 adults aged 18–65 years who have had a headache in the last year and living in AL-Madinah were selected randomly to answer an electronic questionnaire.

Results: The majority of patients were female (66.7%), two-thirds of patients had completed university level and almost (37%) of patients were employed. Prevalence of use of complementary and alternative medicine among patients with headache disorder was (35.4%).The most often used complementary and alternative medicine treatments were massage therapy (20%), Reading holy Quran (13%) and relaxation (11%).

Conclusion: Our study concluded that the headache patients in Madinah seek and use CAM. Neurologists should become more aware about CAM therapies; further randomized and controlled clinical researches with large sample sizes are needed.

Keywords: Headache, Complementary Medicine, Alternative Medicine.

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INTRODUCTION

The most common disorders of the nervous system are the headache disorders which are characterized by recurrent episodes, it includes the primary headache disorders, namely migraine, tension-type headache, and cluster headache, also called chronic daily headache syndrome. Headache can occur due to secondary causes, the most common type of secondary headache is medication overuse headache.[1] The prevalence of headache among adults worldwide is about 50%.[1] The prevalence of headache in Saudi Arabia is estimated to be 63 % of population.[2]

According to World Health Organization (WHO), the complementary and alternative medicine includes health care practices that are not integrated into conventional medicine.[3] The users of complementary and alternative medicine in Saudi Arabia are estimated to be 68% of population, the most frequent alternative therapies used in Saudi Arabia are Holy Quran (50%), honey (40%), and black seed (39%).[4]

Many studies conducted in other countries have shown frequent use of complementary and alternative medicine among adults with headache disorders, they include mind and body therapy, acupuncture, cognitive behavioral therapy, massage and the herbal/other supplements.[5-8]

The aim of this study is to estimate the prevalence and the pattern of use of complementary and alternative medicine among patients with chronic headache in Madinah region.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design and Setting

A cross-sectional, community-based survey of adults living in Madinah, Saudi Arabia.

Study Population and Study Period

Adults (18-65 years) living in Madinah.

Duration of the study was from June 2017 to November 2107.

Sampling Technique and Size

Adults aged 18–65 years who have had a headache in the last year and living in AL-Madinah were selected randomly to answer an electronic questionnaire. Those patients who were not living in Madinah have been excluded.

Data Collection Tools and Instruments

The data was collected by using self-administered structured questionnaire which includes three parts:

Part I: Questions on socio-demographic information as age, gender, marital status, educational level, occupation, income, residency, and Nationality

Part II: Questions focusing on headache (duration, frequency and treatment)

Part III: Complementary or alternative medicine use in the treatment of Headache episodes (type, duration, and frequency)

Pilot Study

Before the start of the study, the structured questionnaires was pre-tested on 10 subjects to explore if there is any ambiguity or items leading to misunderstanding in the questionnaire in order to reach to its current final form. These 10 subjects were not included in the main survey.

Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire

The items in the questionnaire were obtained from numbers of validated questionnaires and validity was completed by reviewing it by 2 experts. The questionnaire was re-administered after a week to the same sample of the pilot study to check test-retest reliability.

Data Analysis

Statistical Analysis was used. Data were coded, entered, and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21.0 (SPSS, Chicago, IL, USA).

Ethical Considerations

Official permission was obtained from the scientific ethical committee of the Taibah University medical college. Informed consent was obtained from all the participants after describing the aim of the study. Privacy and confidentiality were assured.

RESULTS

The prevalence of use of complementary and alternative medicine by patients with headache disorder was (35.4%).

The table 1 represents the socio-demographic characteristics of the patients; it shows that (49.0%) of the patients were aged from 25 to 44 years old, only (6.1%) of participants were aged from 45 to 65 years old. The majority of participants were females (66.7%), while (33.3%) of the participants were males. Only (0.7%) of the participants were uneducated. About half of participants (51.7%) had monthly income less than 2000 SR.

Table 2 demonstrates the headache characteristics, it shows that the frequency of a headache for (81.0%) of participants were less than 15 days per month. The majority of participants (57.1%) used medication to treat a headache.

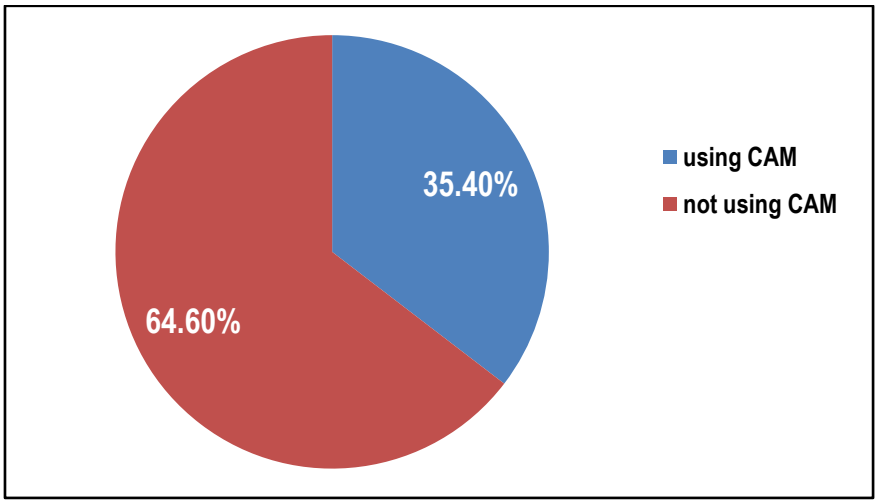

Fig 1: The prevalence of use of CAM by patients with headache disorder

Table 1: The socio-demographic information's of the patients

VARIABLE		n	%
Age	**18-24**	66	44.9
	25-44	72	49.0
	45-65	9	6.1
Sex	**Female**	98	66.7
	Male	49	33.3
Education	**Non**	1	0.7
	Primary	1	0.7
	Post-primary/Secondary	53	36.1
	University/College	92	62.6
Occupation	**Employed**	54	36.7
	Non employed	69	46.9
	Student	24	16.3
Marital status	**Married**	66	44.9
	Single	79	53.7
	Divorced/widow	2	1.4
Income per month	**Less than 2000 SR**	76	51.7
	From 2000 to 5000 SR	24	16.3
	More than 5000 SR	47	32.0

Table 2: The headache characteristics

VARIABLE		n	%
Frequency of pain (headache days/month)	15 days per month or more	28	19.0
	Less than 15 days per month	119	81.0
Medication to treat a headache	Yes	84	57.1
	No	63	42.9
Onset of a headache	Less than three months	48	32.7
	More than three consecutive months.	99	67.3

Table 3: Duration of using CAM

		n	%
Duration of using of complementary and alternative medicine among patients with headache disorder	Less than 1 year	12	23.1
	From 1 to less than 2 years	14	26.9
	From 2 to less than 4 years	6	11.5
	More than 4 years	20	38.5

Table 4.CAM treatments used by patients with headache disorders

	n	%
Praying	20	10
Reading holy Quran	25	12.5
Reading Sunnah	10	5
Honey	11	5.5
Black seed	10	5
Islamic Hejamah (Bloodletting/Couping)	17	8.5
Cauterization	2	1
Henna plant	6	3
Alo vera	0	0
herbs	16	8
Deep breathing exercise	15	7.5
Relaxation	21	10.5
Massage therapy	39	19.5
Head banding	1	.5
oils	4	2
others	3	1.5

Table 5: Frequency of using CAM

		n	%
Frequency	Only once	8	15.4
	daily	3	5.8
	weekly	4	7.7
	Occasionally	37	71.2

Table 6: Frequency of visiting a traditional healer for the treatment of a headache

		n	%
Frequency of visiting a traditional healer or alternative medicine therapist for the treatment of a headache	Non	39	75.0
	Once	9	17.3
	Several times	4	7.7

Table 7: Reasons for using of CAM

		n	%
The reasons for using of complementary and alternative medicine	Considered as a part of the customs and traditions	15	21.1
	Follow the rules of the Islam	22	31.0
	Failure of the medical treatment	14	19.7
	Fear of the danger of medical treatment and the side effects of drugs.	15	21.1
	You don't believe in conventional medicine.	2	2.8
	CAM is more effective	2	2.8
	Friend recommendation	1	1.4

Table 8: Dependence on CAM

		n	%
Depending on the complementary and alternative medicine alone without the use of medical drugs	Yes	15	28.8
	No	37	71.2

Table 9: Source of recommendation of CAM

		n	%
Source of recommendation of complementary and alternative medicine	From health personnel outside of the hospital setting	2	2.7
	From health personnel in the hospital	4	5.4
	From Friends	8	10.8
	From family members	31	41.9
	From traditional healer	4	5.4
	From Mass media (TV, newspaper, radio, magazines)	16	21.6
	From other patients	9	12.2

Table 10. Relationship between prevalence of use of CAM and other variables

EDUCATION LEVEL						P-value
Prevalence Of Use Of CAM		Non-educated	Primary	Post - primary/Secondary	University/College of education	0.436
	Yes	1	0	17	34	
	No	0	1	36	58	
OCCUPATION						P-value
Prevalence of use of CAM		Employed		Non employed	Student	0.108
	Yes	25		20	7	
	No	29		49	17	
INCOME						P-value
Prevalence of use of CAM		Less than 2000 SR.		From 2000 to 5000 SR.	More than 5000 SR	0.680
	Yes	25		8	19	
	No	51		16	28	
FREQUENCY OF PAIN (HEADACHE DAYS/MONTH)						P-value
Prevalence of use of CAM		15 days per month or more.		Less than 15 days per month.		0.691
	Yes	9		43		
	No	19		76		
MEDICATION USE						P-value
Prevalence of use of CAM		Yes		No		0.426
	Yes	32		20		
	No	52		43		
ONSET OF A HEADACHE						P-value
Prevalence of use of CAM		Less than three months		More than three consecutive months.		0.994
	Yes	17		35		
	No	31		64		
SEX						P-value
Prevalence of use of CAM		Male		Female		0.903
	Yes	17		35		
	No	32		63		
AGE						P-value
Prevalence of use of CAM		18-24 years old		25-44	45-65	0.197
	Yes	19		28	5	
	No	47		44	4	

DISCUSSION

Despite the increasing use of CAM in the treatment of diseases including headache disorders in other countries [5-7-9]. There are few studies done in Saudi Arabia about CAM and none of them were about the use of CAM by patients with headache disorder. This study is the first one to estimate the prevalence and pattern of use of CAM by patients with headache disorder in Saudi Arabia. In our study (34.4%) of the patients were using CAM in the treatment of headache episode comparing to (49.5%) in the United States.[5] This difference could be due to cultural

differences. Our study shows that massage therapy (19.5%) is the most common type of CAM used by patients with headache disorder followed by reading holly Quran (12.8%) and relaxation (7.7%) compared to Turkish study which showed the massage therapy (51%) as most used one which is similar to our study. [7] The most common source of the recommendation of CAM is from a family member (41.9%) as compared to an Italian study which showed a friend or relative is most common one(52.7%).[9] The most common reason to try CAM in treatment of a headache in our study is to follow the rules of Islam (31.0%) which is different from previous study done in Italy that showed CAM offered a 'potential improvement of headache' as most common reason[9] and this may due to difference in culture and religion between two countries.

CONCLUSION

Our study shows that the patients with headache disorders used CAM beside the conventional treatments. The primary health care physician and neurologists should be more aware of other health practices that may affect medical treatments.

We recommend further researches to evaluate the effectiveness of CAM in treating patients with headache disorders.

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