Complementary medicines and therapies

An open learning programme for pharmacists

Educational solutions for the NHS pharmacy workforce
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Complementary medicines and therapies

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Educational solutions for the NHS pharmacy workforce

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The information contained herein is correct at the time of publication. You are encouraged to cross-check information prior to making important decisions.

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Appendix 1 Examples of common OTC herbal remedies and how they are often used
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Action planner (Enclosed in the pocket at the front of this folder)
About this open learning course

Study guidance

This course will take you about eight hours to work through, depending on your learning style and experience.

The following suggestions will help you if you are new to CPPE open learning materials:

- Plan to set aside specific times to work through the material and discipline yourself to keep your appointments.
- Study in manageable and digestible chunks. Try to intersperse study with practice, looking for opportunities to reflect on and apply what you have learnt.
- Make use of any occasional spare time you have (e.g., quiet periods in the pharmacy, during a train/bus journey).

Terminology

You will be introduced to a variety of terms in this course, but one particular phrase is used frequently. This is complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). This term is used in this course to cover all non-conventional disciplines, whether a product or medicine is involved, or whether the intervention involves a procedure or therapy without accompanying medicine.

Exercises

Throughout the sections you will come across exercises, identified by . These are intended to reinforce learning and give you an opportunity to think and reflect on what you have read. They will also help you to meet the objectives of this course.

Complete the exercises as fully as possible before comparing what you have written with the answers at the end of the sections or the comments that follow in the text. Note too that the ‘answers’ to exercises may contain information not provided in the main text so you should aim to complete all the exercises.

Discuss your responses to the exercises with a colleague. This can be an extremely useful way of consolidating your learning and expertise.

Case studies

Case studies are used to demonstrate the context and conditions of use of a number of complementary medicines and therapies. Cases are developed to prompt you to consider making medication queries that include complementary medicines and therapies. The cases focus attention on possible drug interactions and assessment of benefit-risk balance.

They are designed to offer preparation for similar or related cases that you may face in your practice.

They are presented in a question and answer format, but it is not the intention for you to answer the questions as you would if they were exercises. Within the case
studies, the questions are answered for you and are intended to provide information on the complementary therapy or medicine being presented.

Exercises are also included within the case studies, but these are clearly marked with a number, and where ‘answers’ are provided, they are given at the end of the section.

Sections 3-6 are essentially four in-depth case scenarios in which you will be introduced to six people – three men (Jack, Sanjit and William) and three women (Elizabeth, Hilda and Jill). The case studies are designed to cover the broad issues in relation to your role in CAM as a pharmacist – within the context of NHS targets and priorities. However, they do not cover every area of CAM practice, or every CAM therapy. You can use the background information provided in the *Compendium of common complementary therapies* (available on the CPPE website: [www.cppe.man.ac.uk](http://www.cppe.man.ac.uk)) to answer the more detailed questions you may have.

Broadly, your role in relation to CAM is no different than it is in any other service area. In other words, you need to:

- focus on the patient and what your service can deliver for them. Remember that primary care organisations (PCOs) are interested in services that benefit patients, not pharmacists
- consider medicines management issues (eg asking questions about CAM when conducting medication reviews; identifying drug-CAM interactions, potential adverse reactions)
- be aware of your responsibilities in relation to clinical governance (eg ensuring the safety of dispensed products, the quality of the OTC products you stock, the overall quality of your service)
- work collaboratively with other professionals (both conventional and CAM practitioners) in both primary and secondary care to ensure patients are referred to the appropriate practitioners and to facilitate continuity of service.

The four case studies are intended to highlight these issues, but they do not provide the detail on whether a particular therapy is suitable for a certain condition or not. If you want such information in depth, you will need to look at other reference sources.

**Study group activity**

This icon indicates that the exercise is particularly appropriate for discussion with other community pharmacists at a local study group. Contact your local CPPE tutor for details of the next meeting.

**Action planner**

Use the action planner to record the activities contained in the course to assist the transfer of your learning into action. This will also provide a useful summary of your professional development. You will be reminded at various points throughout the text to complete part of the action planner. It will help you to look for ways of improving your practice once you have completed the course.
CPPE website

A *Compendium of common complementary therapies* is available to download from the CPPE website at [www.cppe.man.ac.uk](http://www.cppe.man.ac.uk). Using the contact information and web addresses within this compendium you will be able to access up-to-date information and further detail about a wide range of therapies.

Multiple choice questions

The MCQ for this programme is available online only. In order to access the MCQ you should go to [www.cppe.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.cppe.manchester.ac.uk), click ‘Login’ and complete the login process.

If you have not done this before you should click on the link: ‘register and receive your password’ and follow the instructions there.

Once you have logged in successfully you should choose your sector of pharmacy, eg community, hospital, etc, and then choose ‘My CPPE’ from your pharmacy sector page. Then choose ‘My CPD record’ on the menu bar. Scroll down your listing until you find this programme title, then click on ‘attempt MCQ’.

If you complete the MCQ successfully you will then be able to print your own ‘Certificate of Achievement’.

Feedback

We hope you find this course a useful preparation for practice and a helpful reference point. Please help us to assess the value and effectiveness of the pack by completing the validation form insert and returning it in the enclosed pre-paid envelope.

Professional development

This course is designed to enable pharmacists to evaluate, discuss and competently integrate into daily practice the way in which complementary medicines and therapies play a part in a patient-centred approach to healthcare. Opportunities for reflection on personal practice experiences can be included in your record of continuing professional development.

Aims

The overall aim of the course is to help you to evaluate, discuss and competently integrate into your daily practice an overall understanding of complementary and alternative therapies.

When you have worked through the course you should be able to:

- define and explain the underpinning philosophy of complementary and alternative medicines and put this into context with conventional medicine
- outline the current regulatory and safety issues in relation to complementary and alternative medicines practitioners and products
• identify your potential role and level of service involvement in complementary and alternative medicines
• assess the benefit-risk profile of complementary and alternative medicines
• explain, assess and distinguish between a selection of complementary medicines and therapies
• identify issues in relation to complementary and alternative medicines
• tailor your recommendation for a complementary and alternative medicines practitioner to the patient’s needs and lifestyle in a non-judgmental manner
• identify complementary and alternative medicines services provided by your local primary care organisations
• identify suitable sources of information on complementary and alternative medicines for your customers
• identify interactions between complementary and alternative medicines, therapies and/or products with conventional care and/or medicines.

Further resources

The Compendium of common complementary therapies lists a wide range of further resources. However, during your study of this course you should aim to build up your own resources relevant to your locality (eg lists of reputable complementary practitioners, services provided and their charges). You should also find out the attitude of your local primary care organisations to CAM, whether they use the services of complementary practitioners in GP practices, whether they refer patients and so on. The exercises and action plans, which you will find throughout the text, will remind you to think about these issues.