

Physicians' Attitudes Towards Modern and Complementary Medicine

Hekimlerin Geleneksel ve Tamamlayıcı Tıp ile Modern Tıbbı Dair Görüş ve Düşünceleri

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ÖZ

Giriş: Bu çalışma, İstanbul Sağlık Bilimleri Üniversitesi Ümraniye Eğitim ve Araştırma Hastanesi (UEAH) hekimlerinin modern tıp ile Geleneksel ve Tamamlayıcı Tıp (GETAT) hakkındaki görüşlerini değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Araçlar ve Yöntem: UEAH'de çalışan hekimlerden 407'si ile görüşülmüştür. Katılımcılardan araştırmacılar tarafından hazırlanan anketi doldurmaları istenmiştir. Anket demografik bilgilerin yanı sıra GETAT ve modern tıp hakkındaki görüşleri değerlendiren sorulardan oluşmaktaydı.

Bulgular: Bu hekimlerin ortalama mesleki deneyimleri 10.14±9.49 yıldır. %76.7'si GETAT yöntemlerinin modern tıp için yararlı ve destekleyici yöntemler olduğunu düşünmektedir. Hekimlerin %74.9'u bu konuda farkındalığı artırmak için daha fazla randomize kontrollü çalışma yapılması gerektiğini düşünmektedir. GETAT yöntemlerinin yaygın olarak uygulanması konusunda hekimleri en çok endişelendiren durum bu yöntemlerin uygun veya hiç eğitim almamış kişiler tarafından uygulanmasıdır. Eğitim alan hekimlerin %85.6'sı (n=125) modern tıbbın koruyucu hekimliğe gereken önemi vermediğini düşünmektedir. GETAT yöntemleri konusunda eğitim almış hekimlerin %93.8'i (n=135) hastalarının modern tıp yöntemlerinden memnun kalmaması nedeniyle ek yöntemleri tercih ettiğini, %86.6'sı ise (n=129) modern tıbbın hasta merkezli bir yaklaşım yerine hastalık merkezli olduğunu belirtmiştir.

Sonuç: Hekimler, GETAT yöntemlerinin modern tıbbı destekleyici ve faydalı yöntemler olduğunu düşünmekte ve bu konuda daha fazla randomize kontrollü çalışmaların yapılması gerektiğini belirtmektedirler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: geleneksel tıp; hekimler; tamamlayıcı tedaviler

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aims to evaluate the opinions of physicians in Umranıye Training and Research Hospital (UTRH), University of Health Sciences, İstanbul about modern medicine and Traditional and Complementary Medicine (T&CM).

Materials and Methods: Among the physicians working in UTRH 407 of them were interviewed. The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire prepared by the researchers. Questions evaluating their demographic information, their opinions on modern medicine and T&CM were asked to the participants.

Results: The mean professional experience of these physicians is 10.14±9.49 years. 76.7% of them think that T&CM methods are useful and supportive methods for modern medicine. 74.9% of the physicians think that more randomized controlled studies should be done to increase the awareness about T&CM methods. The most concerning option for physicians about the widespread application of T&CM methods is the employment of these methods by inappropriately trained people or those who have not received any training. 85.6% (n=125) of the physicians who received training on T&CM methods think that modern medicine does not give the due importance to preventive medicine. 93.8% (n=135) of the physicians who were trained in T&CM methods, preferred additional T&CM methods because the patients were not satisfied with modern medical methods, 86.6% (n=129) of them said that modern medicine has a disease-centered approach rather than a patient-centered approach.

Conclusion: Physicians think that T&CM methods are supportive and useful methods for modern medicine and state that more randomized controlled studies should be done about T&CM methods.

Keywords: complementary therapies; physicians; traditional medicine

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INTRODUCTION

Modern medicine, also known as western medicine, has become important in diagnosing and treating diseases with advances in technology, chemistry and molecular biology. Researchers have developed applied research methods (randomised controlled trials) to demonstrate that new ideas in diagnosis and treatment actually work.¹ With the increasing world population, the budget allocated by countries for health is also increasing. In order to contribute to this increased budget diet, behavioral therapies and lifestyle changes can be recommended to suitable patients instead of costly drugs and technological interventions.² Specialty branches are gradually increasing in today's medicine. Most of the specialized physicians only pay attention to the organ or the tissue they specialize in while dealing with the health problems of their patients. This may cause patients to be evaluated as a part rather than a whole and impedes holistic evaluation. Complementary medicine, in contrast to modern medicine, is based on a holistic approach in the diagnosis and treatment of patients and is also called holistic medicine because of this feature. In recent years, following increasing popularity of Traditional and Complementary Medicine many countries have established traditional medicine units. For example, the National Office, which was established in the 90s in the USA, was renamed as the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health in 2014. The purpose of this center is to ensure that T&CM methods help to protect health, contribute to the prevention of diseases, and disseminate evidence-based knowledge about T&CM methods.

In our country, the first regulation regarding T&CM was the "Acupuncture Treatment Regulation" in 1991.⁴ Subsequently, "Traditional and Complementary Medicine Regulation" was published in 2014, and 15 T&CM methods were included in this regulation. Within the scope of this regulation, the questions such as who can practice which methods, in which cases the methods can or cannot be practiced, and the equipment that should be available in the practicing centers are described in detail.⁵

In China, where traditional medicine methods are most

widely used, Traditional Chinese Medicine constitutes approximately 40% of all health services and 90% of general health institutions have traditional medicine departments.^{6,7} In many countries, including the USA, it is seen that more than 40% of the people use T&CM methods at least once a year.⁸ Switzerland is the first country in Europe to integrate T&CM practices into the national health system.⁹ In our country, there are 1.026 T&CM practice units within the hospitals affiliated to the Ministry of Health and practice centers in 24 universities.¹⁰

In this study, it is aimed to evaluate the opinions of physicians about modern medicine and T&CM and the reasons for preferring T&CM methods, and also to reveal the expectations of physicians about T&CM methods.

MATERIALS and METHODS

Our descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted between February 1, 2021, and March 31, 2021, in Istanbul at University of Health Sciences Turkey, Ümraniye Training and Research Hospital (UTRH)

Sample size was calculated among a population of 798 physicians working in UTRH with 5% error margin and 90% reliability and found as at least 332. And thus 407 physicians were accessed for interview. For our study, Approval was obtained from the Istanbul Health Sciences University Ümraniye Training and Research Hospital Clinical Research Ethics Committee with the date of 11.02.2021 and decision number 24.

Informed consent was obtained from each of the participants. Inclusion criteria for the study are giving consent to participate in the study and working as a physician in UTRH between February 1, 2021, and March 31, 2021. Other healthcare workers were not included in the study. Some of the questionnaire forms used in our study was filled by face-to-face interview and some of it was responded online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The questionnaire was prepared by consulting the Department of Public Health, University of Health Sciences. There are 36 questions in the questionnaire

prepared for the study. Two of the questions are open-ended and 34 of them are multiple choice. The questionnaire form consists of four parts in total. The first part contains the demographic information of the physicians participating in the study, the second part examines their own view of modern medicine, the third part consists of the general evaluation of traditional and complementary medicine methods, and the fourth part evaluates views of the physicians who participated in the T&CM training.

The data were analyzed using the SPSS 25.0 package program. The fit of the data to the normal distribution was evaluated by the Kolmogorov Smirnov test. For an overview of the study data descriptive statistical methods such as frequency, ratio, mean, standard deviation, median and min-max values were used. Chi-square test method was used when examining the correlation or difference of categorical data. Statistical significance level was considered as 0.05 and 0.001.

RESULTS

General Assessment of the Participants

Table 1. General Assessment of the Opinions of Doctors on T&CM methods.

		n	n %
Which of the following options made you aware of T&CM methods the most?	Colleagues who are interested in T&CM	190	47.0%
	TV, journals, periodicals, newspapers	64	15.8%
	Cultural life, beliefs	57	14.1%
	Scientific studies proving the effectiveness of T&CM methods	42	10.4%
	High interest in T&CM methods in the environment I live in	42	10.4%
	Publications of the World Health Organization on T&CM applications	9	2.2%
Please tick the option that is closest to you about T&CM methods.	I think they are useful methods and supportive for modern medicine.	312	76.7%
	I don't think they are scientific methods.	55	13.5%
	I have no idea	23	5.7%
Have you used any T&CM method for yourself or your relatives?	Methods with a substantial complications and side effects.	17	4.2%
	Yes	240	59.0%
If you used T&CM methods for yourself or your relatives, what was the effect of these methods on your health?	No	167	41.0%
	Very beneficial	98	38.9%
	Somewhat beneficial	134	53.2%
	No effect	19	7.5%
	I was harmed	1	0.4%

Of the physicians who employed some kind of T&CM method for themselves or their relatives, 37.3% employed cupping therapy (Hijama), 26.5% acupuncture, 25.1% phytotherapy method, 24.1% ozone therapy, 19.9% leech, 15.2% mesotherapy and the remaining all other T&CM methods (Figure 1).

39.1% (n: 159) of the participants had received training on some kind of T&CM method, and 78.1% (n: 318)

Among the physicians participating in the study 34.2% (n:139) were male and 65.8% (n:268) were female while 58.98% (n:240) of them were resident doctor, 13.00% (n:53) were general practitioner, 23.58% (n:96) were specialist, 2.70% (n:11) were doctoral lecturer, 0.74% (n:3) were associate professor and 0.98% (n:4) were professor. The mean years of professional experience of the physicians were 10.14±9.49, with a median value of 5(1-40).

Forty seven percent (n:190) of the participants were aware of T&CM methods through their colleagues who are interested in T&CM, 15.8% (n:64) through television, magazines, newspapers and 14.1% (n:57) through their cultural life and beliefs. Of the participants 76.7% (n: 312) think that these methods are supportive of and beneficial for modern medicine and 59% (n:240) of them employed T&CM method for themselves or their relatives. While 38.9% (n:98) of the physicians who employed T&CM method stated that they benefited substantially from these methods and 0.4% (n:1) stated that they were harmed (Table 1).

demanded the courses related to T&CM methods to be included in the medical school curriculum. (Table 2).

Assessment of Physicians Who Has Got T&CM Certification Training

Among the physicians participating in our study 39.1% (n: 159) received certificate training on some kind of T&CM methods. Physicians and internal medicine physicians with more years of professional experience

received more T&CM training ($p<0.001$ for both) (Table 3).The most common type of T&CM Certification

Training obtained by physicians was cupping therapy (Hijama). (Figure 2).

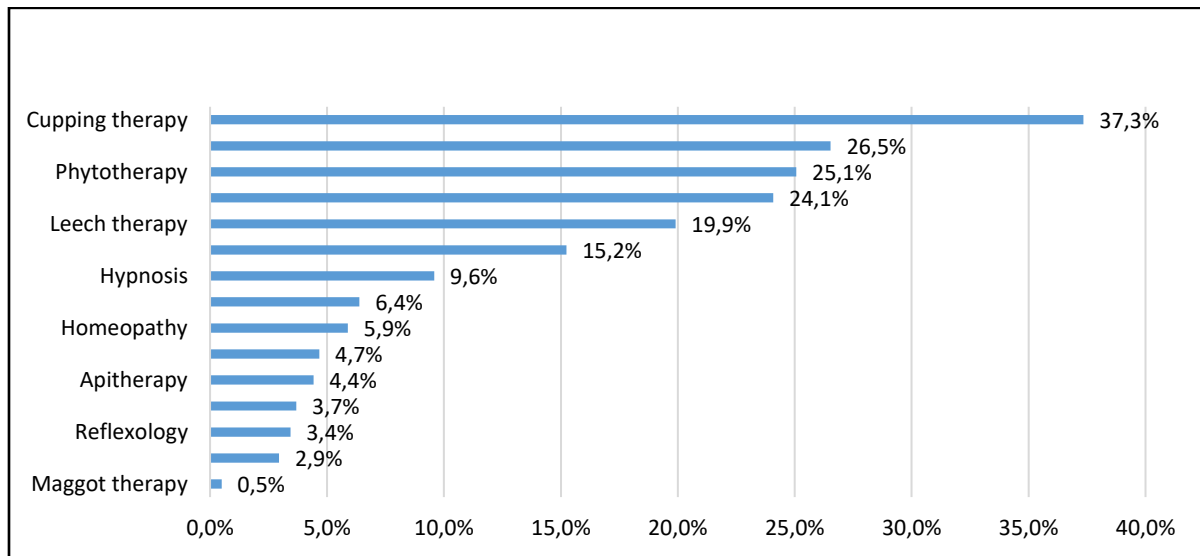


Figure 1. T&CM Methods Employed by Physicians for Themselves or Relatives.

Table 2. Physicians' Opinions on Their own T&CM Training Status and What Can Be Done About T&CM Methods in the Future.

Questions		N	n%
Have you received any training on T&CM methods?	Yes	159	39.1%
	No	248	60.9%
Would you recommend your colleagues to attend T&CM certification trainings?	Yes	347	85.3%
	No	60	14.7%
Would you prefer T&CM methods to be included in the scope of reimbursement by SSI for patients with the proper indications?	Yes	304	74.7%
	No	103	25.3%
“The clinics where T&CM methods are practiced should be expanded.” Do you agree with this idea?	Yes	302	74.2%
	No	105	25.8%
Do you think &CM methods should be included in the medical school curriculum?	Yes	318	78.1%
	No	89	21.9%
Do you think inclination for referral to T&CM methods will increase after the Covid-19 pandemic period?	Yes	288	70.8%
	No	119	29.2%
		N	n %
What do you think can be done to increase awareness of T&CM methods?	Promotion of T&CM methods should be given more coverage in the mass media and booklets about T&CM methods should be disseminated.	144	35.40%
	T&CM certification trainings should be expanded?	217	53.30%
	Congresses and symposiums about T&CM should be held more frequently.	238	58.50%
	Public incentives should be given for the expansion of T&CM clinics.	169	41.50%
	More randomized controlled studies should be conducted on T&CM methods.	305	74.90%
	I have no idea.	27	6.60%
	Employment of T&CM methods by untrained people.	145	35.8%
	Haphazard use T&CM methods to patients lacking proper indications.	78	19.3%
	Discontinuation of treatments recommended by physicians on the side of the patient and resorting to uncontrolled and non-indicated T&CM methods.	109	26.9%
	Perception of T&CM methods as an alternative to modern medicine rather than being complementary.	73	18.0%

When the physicians who received T&CM training were questioned about the reasons why they had such a course, 35.4% (n:144) of them stated that modern medicine should be supported with traditional and complementary

medicine, 12.8% (n: 52) were curious about it, 6.1% (n:25) think that they can spare more time for their patients by using T&CM methods, 6.1% (n:25) of them employs these methods because of the higher financial

earnings, 2.9% (n:12) stated that they received T&CM training to see if T&CM training methods are suitable for modern medicine or not. As for the physicians who didn't get any T&CM training 33.4% (n:136) of them were not interested in these methods, 11.3% (n:46) did not think

that these methods were beneficial, 8.4% (n:34) were anxious about the side effects of these methods, 6.1% (n:25) stated that their patients would not want to have these methods practiced.

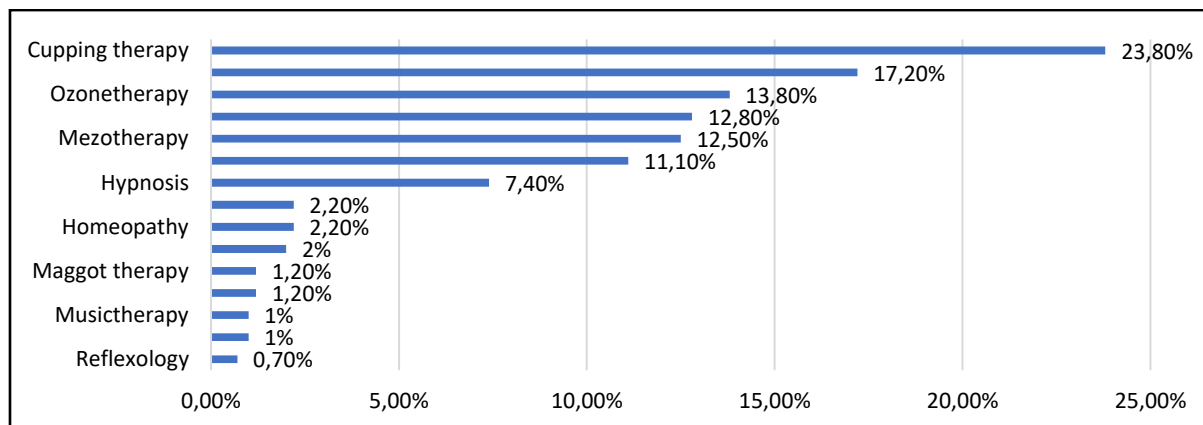


Figure 2. Type of T&CM Certification Training

Table 3. Demographic Characteristics of Physicians Who Has Got T&CM Certification Training.

Demographic Characteristics		Have you received any training on T&CM methods?			
		Yes		No	
		n	n %	n	n %
Sex?	Male	64	40.3%	75	30.2%
	Female	95	59.7%	173	69.8%
Professional experience as a physician?	Mean	15.67		6.59	
	Standard Deviation	9.94		7.20	
	Minimum	1.00		0.10	
	Maximum	40.00		35.00	
	Median	15.00		4.00	
		Have you received any training on T&CM methods?			
		Yes		X ²	p
		N	n %		
Specialization	Surgical	16	10.1%	186.151	<0.001
	Internal	134	84.3%		
	Basic Sciences	9	5.7%		

Ki-square Test

Among the physicians, 39.4% (n: 130) employed some kind of T&CM method to their patients and 66% (n:101) of these physicians stated that their patients benefited from these methods while 29.4% (n:45) stated that they benefited partially, and 4.6% (n:7) stated that they did not

see any effect.

Physicians who employed T&CM methods to their patients applied cupping therapy most commonly with 18.2% (Figure 3).

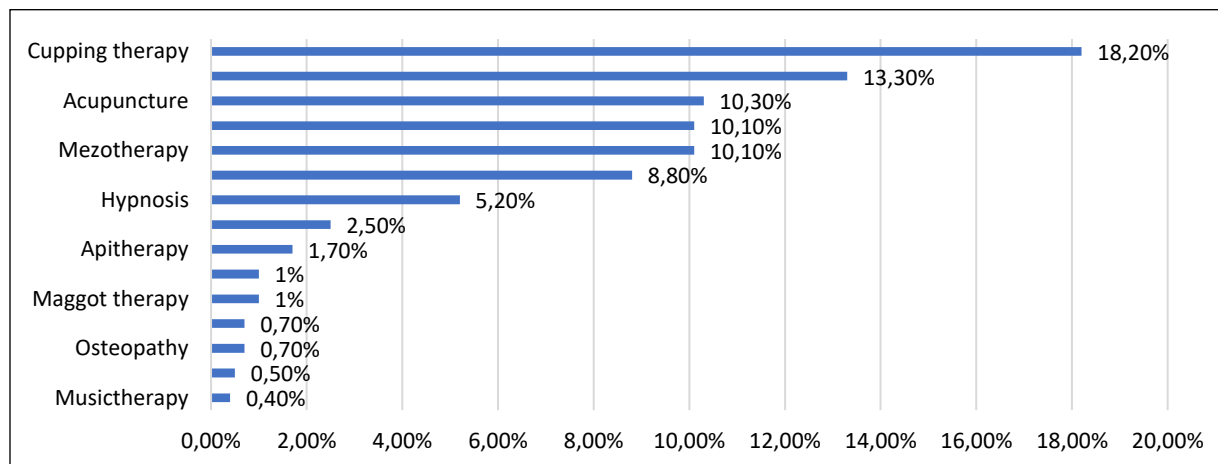


Figure 3. Type of T&CM methods Employed by Physicians.

Of the physicians who employed T&CM method 58% (n:116) did not encounter any complications related to these methods, 36.5% (n:73) observed complications rarely, 4% (n:8) often and 1.5% (n:3) very frequently. The most common complication was vasovagal syncope with 25% (n:26), followed by infections with 20.2% (n:21), allergic reactions with 16.3% (n:17), and 3.8% (n:4). hepatotoxicity, 1% (n:1) nephrotoxicity and other complications 33.7% (n:35).

The comparison of physicians with T&CM Training Certificate and those without

Almost all of the physicians who have received T&CM training think that patients seek benefit from traditional and complementary medicine methods because they are not satisfied completely with modern medical methods ($p=0.001$). Ninety-eight percent (n:156) of the physicians with T&CM training and 62.9% (n:156) of them without T&CM training think that T&CM methods are supportive of and useful for modern medicine ($p<0.001$). While 24.4% (n:53) of the physicians who did not receive T&CM training stated that these methods were not scientific methods, this rate was found to be 1.3% (n:2) in those who received training ($p<0.001$).

Among the physicians who received T&CM training, 50.3% (n:80) stated that they are concerned about the probable employment of these methods by people who aren't properly trained and 18.9% (n:30) of them about employment of T&CM without proper indication. On the other hand, 35.8% (n: 88) of the physicians who did not receive T&CM training stated that they are concerned about uncontrolled referral to T&CM methods instead of conventional medicine and 26.4% (n: 65) of them about probable employment of these methods by people who don't have any training ($p<0.001$). (Supplementary file table 4).

DISCUSSION

In our study, it was observed that physicians with more years of professional experience (16 years and above) and working in the internal branches attended T&CM certificate training programs more than remaining doctors. In a study conducted in Poland, similar findings

were found; it has been observed that physicians with more years of professional experience approach T&CM methods more positively than younger physicians.¹¹ The main reason for this finding may be that increasing experience in medicine motivates physicians to search for different ways to be more beneficial to their patients.

In a study conducted in our country, physicians were asked how they became aware of the T&CM methods and 65.7% of the physicians stated that they were informed through the ministry and scientific resources, 47.8% through the internet and social environment, and 30.5% through the mass media.¹² In our study, according to their own testament 47% of the physicians became aware of the T&CM methods through their friends who were interested in T&CM methods, 15.8% through television, journals, periodicals, newspapers, 14.1% through cultural life and beliefs, 10.4% through scientific studies proving the effectiveness of T&CM methods, 10.4% due to the high interest in T&CM methods in their living environment and 2.2% through the publications of WHO on T&CM practices. The high rate of receiving T&CM training among the physicians participating in our study shows that physicians have relatively more knowledge and experience about these methods and like to share this knowledge and experience with their colleagues.

In a study conducted abroad, 25% of the physicians stated that T&CM is a need. In the same study, physicians stated that they could not talk about T&CM with their patients due to lack of their education about T&CM, lack of awareness about T&CM resources, and limited time during interview with their patients.¹³ In our study, 74.2% of the physicians stated that clinics where T&CM methods are practiced should be expanded. In our study, the demand for an expansion of T&CM clinics can be interpreted as physicians' confidence in T&CM methods has increased over time. Participants in favor of inclusion of T&CM training into medical education curriculum was about 50% in various countries, but 78.1% participants, which is remarkably high, in our study were in favor of inclusion of T&CM training into medical education curriculum.¹⁴

In another study conducted in our country, 34.9% of

physicians stated that they used some kind of T&CM method. 19.1% of the physicians using the T&CM method stated that they used acupuncture treatment, 18.4% used phytotherapy, and 10.5% used the reflexology method.¹⁵ In our study, 59% of the physicians stated that they employed some kind of T&CM method for themselves or their relatives. 37.3% of the physicians stated that they employed cupping therapy, 26.5% acupuncture, 25.1% phytotherapy. The higher rate of physicians using T&CM practices in our study can be attributed to the fact that the higher proportion of physicians participating in our study participated T&CM training and T&CM clinics are increasingly expanding.

In a study investigating the knowledge level of medical school students about T&CM practices; it has been observed that the T&CM method, which students have the most knowledge about, is the cupping therapy.¹⁶ In our study, it was concluded that cupping therapy was the most frequently practiced T&CM method by both the physician group who had received any training on T&CM and the did not. Higher level of awareness about this method may be attributed to the fact that cupping therapy has been practiced in our country for many years and it's becoming more prevalent gradually.

In the study conducted by Yüksel et al. in Zonguldak in 2019, 2.3% of the physicians participating in the study had a T&CM training certificate, and 48.5% stated that they thought T&CM methods were beneficial.¹⁷ In our study, 39.1% of the physicians participating in the study received T&CM training, and 76.7% of them stated that T&CM methods are supportive of and useful for modern medicine. The high rate of physicians receiving T&CM training in our study shows that there is an interest about T&CM training and that the interest is gradually increasing. In addition, the high rate of participants finding T&CM methods to be highly beneficial in our study may be related to the fact that rate of physicians with T&CM training is high among participants and the increasing positive feedback about T&CM methods over time.

It has been observed that physicians who received T&CM certificate training think that modern medicine does not give due importance to preventive medicine, does not

approach patients in a holistic manner and adopts a disease-centered approach rather than a patient-centered one. In a study conducted on cancer patients from 4 countries abroad, it was seen that a significant portion of the patients used traditional and complementary medicine methods together with cancer treatments. Patients stated that they used T&CM methods to meet their emotional, spiritual, social and cultural needs.¹⁸ Briefly, physicians who want to receive training on T&CM methods and physicians and patients who want to benefit from these methods, think that T&CM methods evaluate the patients as a whole and approach them biopsychosocially.

It was observed that a substantial portion of the physicians (21.4%) without T&CM certification training think that T&CM methods were not scientific methods. We can think that these prejudices against T&CM methods are formed among physicians due to the inability to access sufficient and correct information about T&CM methods or the complications that occur due to the uncontrolled use of these methods by patients. We hope that more scientific studies on T&CM methods, and dissemination of informative symposiums and certificate trainings will help to overcome this prejudice.

In a survey conducted at a university hospital in Sweden, 61.2% of the health care providers who participated in the study think that more research funds should be given for T&CM research, and half of the participants were positive about learning T&CM methods.¹⁹ In addition, in a study conducted in Vietnam, it was emphasized that traditional medicine should be integrated with modern western medicine and its effectiveness should be demonstrated clinically by using modern methods.²⁰ In our study, 75% of the physicians participating in the survey stated that more randomized controlled studies should be conducted to increase awareness of T&CM methods, 58% recommended more congresses and symposiums related to T&CM to be held, 53% of them think that T&CM certification trainings should be more widespread and 41% stated that more public incentives should be given for the dissemination of T&CM clinics. Majority of the participants of the study in Sweden and in our study think that more studies should be done on T&CM. In this way, the effectiveness of T&CM methods

and the indications and contraindications will be clearly demonstrated.

In a study conducted on Chinese medicine practitioners at the Pacific College of Oriental Medicine in the USA, it was stated that the patient-centered approach is important. Participants stated that the patient should be served physically and spiritually. In addition, participants stated that integration of modern medicine with traditional and complementary medicine (T&CM) could improve the health care system.²¹ In our study, the majority of physicians who received T&CM training (81.1%) think that modern medicine has a disease-centered approach rather than patient-centered one, while 75.4% think that modern medicine did not approach patients from a biopsychosocial perspective. In addition, 35.4% of the physicians in our study think that modern medicine should be supported with traditional and complementary medicine methods in order to better treat their patients. To conclude, physicians who have received T&CM training think that a patient-centered approach is important, and that modern medicine should be supported by traditional and complementary medicine.

In a study on Traditional Chinese Medicine; it has been shown that some TCM drugs can be effective in the control and primary and secondary prevention of diseases which are cardiovascular risk factors such as diabetes, dyslipidemia, and hypertension.²² Another study showed that TCT is generally effective for knee osteoarthritis.²³ A study on Alzheimer's disease shows that some herbal medicines related to TCT have neurogenic potential and are promising in Alzheimer's disease.²⁴ In our study, 66% of the physicians who practiced T&CM methods on their patients stated that their patients benefited from these methods, and 29.4% stated that they benefited partially. Physicians receive positive feedback from their patients to whom T&CM method is employed and sharing this feedback with their colleagues will reduce distrust against T&CM methods and will further increase interest in T&CM methods.

In a study on colorectal cancer patients in Europe, it was reported that one third of the patients used complementary and alternative therapies.²² It is seen that the use of T&CM is common in our country.^{25,26}

Increasing demand for T&CM methods requires physicians to know more about these methods. In our study, 85.3% of physicians recommend their colleagues to attend T&CM certification trainings. This rate shows us that physicians think that it's important to have knowledge about T&CM methods.

In a study conducted abroad on COVID-19, some natural herbal medicine and T&CM practices were observed to prevent and treat the diseases.²⁷ In another study, early employment of T&CM in mild diseases may prevent the progression of the diseases.²⁸ In our study, 70.8% of the physicians stated that the inclination to referral for T&CM methods will increase after the COVID-19 pandemic. Briefly, physicians think that T&CM methods should be used especially, to strengthen the immune system to fight against diseases.

In a study, very few of the patients using T&CM consulted to his/her physician or used these methods with a recommendation of a physician.²⁵ In a study conducted in the USA, 42.3% of the patients did not explain the T&CM methods they used to their physicians. The most common (57%) reason for this lack of explanation is lack of quest on the side of the physician.²⁹ In a study conducted in Australia, a significant portion of the participants did not consult their physicians before using T&CM treatments, and they did not share these treatments with their physicians afterwards, either.³⁰ Patients' referral to T&CM methods without obtaining the opinion of a physician and have these methods practiced by unqualified people may give rise to some complications.^{31,32} In our study, 27% of the physicians are concerned about uncontrolled discontinuation of conventional treatment and referral to T&CM methods, and 19% are concerned about use of T&CM methods without proper indication. In order to prevent all these problems, physicians should question their patients during their interview whether they use any T&CM method. Patients should be informed about T&CM and these methods when needed. Thus, physicians should have some notions about T&CM.

However, as among the findings of our study, a substantial number of physicians consider T&CM methods unscientific and do not favor these methods. It is

probable that such physicians criticize their patients for their referral to T&CM and this may be a trigger for patients to abstain from consulting their physicians about T&CM methods. This will bring the hazard of patients being treated under the name of T&CM by non-physician and incompetent individuals. Physicians who received T&CM training stated that they were concerned about the employment of these methods by people who did not receive proper training, while physicians who did not participate in T&CM training stated that they were concerned on the side of the patient about uncontrolled discontinuation of the treatments recommended by doctors and resorting to T&CM methods.

In a study, a significant portion of modern health professionals stated that traditional medicine practitioners should be properly trained in order to improve health services.³³ In this way, T&CM methods can only be employed by well-trained practitioners in licensed clinics, and patients will be prevented from leaving their ongoing treatments uncontrolled. Briefly, physicians both in our country and abroad think that good training of T&CM practitioners is important for the health system.

As for limitations, although UTRH where the study was conducted was one of the biggest hospitals of Istanbul and employing a reasonable number of physicians, yet this was a single centered study, and all of the participants were from the same hospital. Therefore, we cannot generalize the results of the study to all of the physicians and cannot conclude that these results are reflecting the general view across the country. The other limitation of the study is that some of the participants responded the questionnaire online due to pandemic measures while the others filled it face to face.

Conclusion

Majority of physicians participating in our study think that T&CM methods are supportive of and useful for modern medicine. It is observed that physicians with more years of professional experience are more inclined to use T&CM methods. The physicians are most concerned regarding T&CM methods about the probability of employment of these methods by untrained people. Patients should be evaluated as a whole and

integration of T&CM methods with modern medical methods should be supported.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is not any conflict of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript.

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Ethics Committee Permission

This study was approved by the Istanbul Health Sciences University Umraniye Training and Research Hospital Clinical Research Ethics Committee. (Date: 11.02.2021, Decision No: 40).

Authors' Contributions

Concept/Design: HK, SE, EP. Data Collection and/or Processing: HK, EP. Data analysis and interpretation: SE, EP. Literature Search: HK, SE. Drafting manuscript: HK, SE, EP. Critical revision of manuscript: HK, SE, EP. Supervisor: SE, EP.

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