Abstract

Objectives: This study aimed to investigate the prevalence, disclosure and adverse effects of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) use in hospitalised patients, and to explore the associations between patients’ perceived side effects and relevant factors. Methods: Patients who were admitted to a district general hospital and met the eligibility criteria were interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire. Their medications and pertinent details were verified from the medical notes. All quantitative and qualitative data were collated and analysed. A chisquared test was performed to test the associations of the perceived CAM side-effects with the significance level determined at $\alpha=0.05$. Results: A total of 240 in-patients completed the study. They were mostly white British (98.8%). The prevalence of CAM use within two years was 74.6% and one month 37.9%. Only 19 of 91 patients (20.9%) using CAM within one month disclosed their current CAM applications. Nearly half of patients (45.8%) who used CAM within two years experienced various CAM side-effects that tended to resolve after discontinuation. Slightly more than half (57.6%) perceived CAM side-effects and their perceptions were significantly associated with gender ($P=0.048$) and consideration for future CAM use ($P=0.033$). Potential interactions between herbal remedies/dietary supplements and prescribed drugs, such as garlic with lisinopril or aspirin, were assessed in 82 patients (45.8%). Conclusion: Most in-patients used CAM and experienced some adverse effects. The disclosure of CAM use and its adverse outcomes should be encouraged by healthcare professionals.

Keywords

Complementary Therapies, Disclosure, Inpatients, United Kingdom.