Title: Complementary & alternative medicine (CAM) in midwifery

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Introduction: The popularity of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) has exponentially grown over the last decade. While it is known that more women than men use complementary and alternative therapies, it is important to look at women who are pregnant or possibly receiving hormonal therapy, as side effects and consequences of these therapies may have significant effect on their health status. Research, the majority of which has been conducted in the US and the UK, reveals a significant proportion of midwives are interested in and/or are practicing CAM for the women in their care (approximately 40%). The CAM practiced by the midwives interviewed was: acupressure; aromatherapy; massage; reflexology; reiki healing.

Methods: For assessing Children and Exercise Appropriate Practices, a review article on the last existent researches carried out.

Results: Although nursing has always used non pharmacologic interventions for the relief of the discomforts of child birth, alternative and complementary therapies, based on a balance of body, mind and spirit, are becoming more acceptable. At Warwick Hospital, acupuncture has been used for over 4,000 women. Moxibustion sticks have been used to turn breech presentation babies to cephalic. Research by a midwife acupuncturist in southern England found 80% success even after 36 weeks gestation. At Queen Mary’s Hospital in Sid cup, Kent, a complementary therapy clinic for women has been available since 1995. Reflex zone therapy has been used for relaxation and to stimulate the onset of labor for post maturity (following discussion with the consultant). The increased use of complementary therapies has provided midwives with the opportunity to expand their current practices of care given to women.

Conclusion: While it is known that more women than men use complementary and alternative therapies, it is important to look at women who are pregnant, as side effects and consequences of these therapies may have a significant effect on their health status. There is a need to establish a framework within which the safety and efficacy of complementary medicine can be critically evaluated. With a formulated index, the consumer would be provided with a degree of protection currently lacking in the control of complementary therapies. There is widening scope for the development of research with the increased number of established academic courses on complementary therapies. The University of Westminster in central
London and the University of Greenwich, for example, both run degree courses in complementary medicine. Education will play a key role in the integration of complementary therapies into the health care services, but government commitment and involvement are also needed to achieve success.

**Key word:** Complementary & alternative medicine (CAM), midwifery, pregnant women

**References:**


