anthroposophic medicine); certificates in phytotherapy among private physicians; patient demand for CAM; services offered and time required; and referrals for CAM treatments.

**Materials and methods:** Written survey of 750 physicians (500 German-speaking; 250 French-speaking) in primary care practices (FMH Praktische Ärzte, FMH Innere Medizin, FMH Allgemeinmedizin, and FMH Pädiatrie). Response rate: 50.4%.

**Results:** In total, 14.1% of the 750 respondents had certificates of qualification in one of the abovementioned CAM disciplines. In 2007, most certificates were in the area of TCM/acupuncture, followed by homoeopathy. Patient demand for CAM: Approximately 50% of patients asked about CAM treatment less than once a week; 20% of patients asked about CAM once a week; and 30% of patients asked about CAM more than once a week.

**Services offered and referrals:** 30.4% of the respondents offered CAM treatment. Homoeopathy and phytotherapy were the most frequently offered services, followed by TCM/acupuncture. CAM services were offered by the respondents either in addition to standard services (i.e. more than 50% of respondents who offered CAM services spent less than 25% of their time doing so) or as their predominant services (i.e. occupying more than 75% of their time). Altogether, 62.5% of the respondents referred patients for CAM treatments. The majority of referrals were for TCM/acupuncture. Of the 37.5% of respondents who did not refer their patients, 40% provided CAM services themselves.

**Conclusion:** Approximately 75% of the participating physicians offered CAM services themselves or referred patients for CAM treatments.

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A qualitative analysis of patients’ experiences of acupuncture: Implications for understanding non-specific effects

**F. Bishop**, **G. Lewith**, **L. Yardley**

**University of Southampton, School of Psychology, Southampton, UK**

**Background:** Acupuncture is a popular form of alternative medicine. It has shown large non-specific effects, but which factors contribute to these effects is unclear. We therefore aimed to identify the psychosocial factors that could contribute to treatment outcomes in acupuncture.

**Methods:** We interviewed a purposive sample of 35 individuals (29 women) who had used acupuncture for various conditions and to varying effect. We used framework analysis to summarise and interpret the data.

**Findings:** Participants described intra-personal and inter-personal experiences before, during and after acupuncture needling that could contribute to treatment outcomes. Key themes in the analytic framework reflect individual physicality, cognition and emotion; social negotiation and support through the therapeutic relationship and close social networks; and societal and environmental influences.

**Discussion:** The psychosocial context of acupuncture from patients’ perspective is broad. We must expand placebo theories in order to generate more comprehensive understandings of non-specific treatment effects in complex interventions.

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