
Awareness and Use Perception towards Complementary and Alternative Medicines (CAM) in Saudi Arabia

Dr. Mohammad Zulfeequar Alam*

Mr. Mohammad Ali. Hurieb**

Dr. Hatem H Garamoun ***

Abstract

Article Received: 5th May, 2018
Article Revised: 18th May, 2018
Article Accepted: 29th May, 2018

Keywords:

Complementary
alternative medicine;
Herbal Medicines;
Consumer Perception;
Saudi Arabia.

Complementary and Alternative medicines are becoming very popular methods of treatment among the users in the world. As it's have high acceptance to treat many types of ailments which cannot be cured by the modern medicines. In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), this path is also prevailing in the society but due to the lack of awareness, unavailability of professional practitioners and some other factors it is not adopted properly. In the region, very little studies have been carried out to understand the awareness level, its uses and perception towards CAM among the users. The objectives of the study were to provide an in-depth understanding about females' perceptions towards awareness and uses of CAM in the region. For the purpose a survey sample of 120 respondents in Jeddah city at convenience bases were taken during the month of September to November 2016. Data collection with using a structured and close ended questionnaire was carried out. The received data were coded and analysed with appropriate statistical tools. It was investigated that the majority of the respondents were aware about the CAM. Its uses and benefits in certain ailments were highly noticed by them. Moreover they were also positive about the benefits of CAM treatment system.

Copyright © 2018 International Journals of Multidisciplinary Research Academy. All rights reserved.

Author correspondence:

1. **Dr. Mohammad Zulfeequar Alam***, Assistant Professor, Department of Marketing, College of business Administration (CBA), University of Business & Technology (UBT), P.O. Box 110200, Jeddah 21361, Kingdom Saudi Arabia,
Corresponding Author Email Id: zulfeqarm@ubt.edu.sa

1. Introduction:

The term complementary alternative medicine (CAM) includes many types of treatments and procedures that are usually not incorporated in conventional medicine. There is a broad range of alternative medicines such as acupuncture, aromatherapy, reiki, massage and so on are seriously considered as a medical form of treatments to help cure health ailments. These alternative medicines are based on irrational belief systems, traditional ethnic systems, spiritual energies, holistic therapy, or/and religion, faith healing, and prayer (Alam M Z, 2008). According to Jones (2016). Complementary and alternative medications are the form of remedies that are also termed as herbal or spiritual healing as duly mentioned by (Kelner and Wellman, 2014).

Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) are widely used, both as a supplement to conventional or mainstream health care and as part of traditional healthcare systems and practices (Bodeker et al. 2005). Australian data, published in 2007, reported that 69% of the people had used one or more modes of CAM in the previous 12 months. However, the use of CAM varied with age, sex, and a range of other factors (Xue et al . 2007; Alam M Z, 2003). Those with chronic health issues, cancer, and chronic pain, in particular, were found to have made more excellent use of CAM (Sayadah el al. 2006). Most of these studies revealed a surprisingly high predominance and an overall positive attitude toward the use of CAM. For example, a survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the United States showed that 40.0% of adults had used CAM in 12 months (Barnes et al., 2007). A study conducted in Ajman, United Arab Emirates, showed that approximately one-third of the seekers of modern medical care also use CAM, mostly without physician advice (E. Mathue et al., 2013). CAM is used widely for treatment of chronic diseases in many parts of the world. In a study conducted in the Muscat region of Oman, almost half of the patients used CAM therapies for diabetes mellitus, and they had a strong faith in its effectiveness in treating patients (R. M Al Kinda et al., 2011). A study conducted in Malaysia showed that there was a high prevalence of CAM use by the population, particularly the use of herb-based therapies for health issues (Z. M et al., 2009).

The use of herbal remedies is widespread in the Arab world, and Saudi Arabia is no exception to it. Anecdotally, it is considered that herbal products are favourite because of a widespread belief that the preparations are natural and therefore safe. Another important

practice in Saudi Arabia is the increased prevalence of self-medication, along with the concomitant use of herbal and conventional medicines. This is an area of high concern due to its potential for herb interactions (Al Braik et al., 2008; Al Arifi 2013). One particular study performed in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia showed a 68.0% prevalence of CAM use among the Saudi participants living in the region of Riyadh who showed favourable opinions toward it, relating to it as "natural materials" (Al Faris et al. 2008). Knowledge and awareness of complementary and alternative medications have significantly increased in the Saudi Arabia region (Jazieh et al., 2012). According to Elolemy and AlBedah (2012), about 90% of the people who participated that a good knowledge about complementary and alternative medications and about 75% people use complementary and alternative medications as primary medications within Saudi Arabia. Rahman et al. (2004) showed that Saudi people tend to use additional and alternate medications as they feel safe when using natural medicines such as using vitamins and mineral supplements. In Saudi Arabia, Tibbu Nabawi or prophetic medicine is broadly accepted and practised by most physicians and the public. This is indicated in a report by the study of National Center for CAM in Saudi Arabia 2010 (Albedah 2010; Alfaris et al., 2008) who recorded that more than 70% of the public in the Riyadh region had used practices related to prophetic medicine in their lifetime.

One of the excellent medical markets growing at a massive rate by allopathic treatments today is complementary and alternative medications as indicated by (Synovitz and Larson, 2013). Aloft the last 15 years, there has been a steady rise with regards to global marketing ratio for complementary medicines (Greene, 2016). The CAM industry continues to be profitable as the worldwide annual market for these products approaches US\$ 60 billion (United Nation Report, 2000) Recent statistics have revealed that the sales growth of these medications has risen from \$5 billion per annum to \$7 billion per annum magnanimously (Synovitz and Larson, 2013). It has been estimated that over 68 percent of the global population are into one or other form complementary medication (Cahill, 2017). Saudi Arabia is considered to be one of the fastest growing markets for complementary and alternative remedies and has gained a good ranking on the global marketing platform for these medications (Al-Rowais, 2002). As per Holmes and Cherniak (2017), indeed, rising knowledge about complementary and alternative medicine will help Saudi Arabia lead the global markets shortly (Parker, 2016).

2. Objective of the Study:

In line with this trend, the present work aimed at studying awareness, perception, and general attitudes respondents of towards CAM with related to herbal medicines particularly in Saudi Arabia.

3. Research Methodology:

For the study, a close-ended questionnaire from 120 participants was used to capture the data from the respondents that purchased, used herbal medicines and herbal dietary supplements. The survey was done based on convenience sampling method in Jeddah Saudi Arabia in 2016. The questionnaire involved four parts the socio-demographic characteristics of the buyer, the origin of advice for the advantage of the obtained herbal products, the consumer's attitude towards the safety, of awareness, the effectiveness of herbal remedies and herbal dietary supplements and their combination with conventional treatments, and assessment of the purchased herbal products. The data from each of the recovered questionnaire were coded and entered into Excel, and statistical analysis, JAS and SISA software were used. Moreover, results were summarised using with descriptive statistics as appropriate.

4. Results Analysis and Discussion:

	Variables	Frequency	%
Age	Below 20	76	63.333
	20-30	32	26.667
	30-40	8	6.667
	40-50	4	3.333
	50 and Above	0	0
Gender	Male	28	23.333
	Female	92	76.667
Educational Level	Uneducated	8	6.667
	Elementary	12	10
	Intermediate	16	13.333
	High School	20	16.667
	Bachelor and above	64	53.333
Total Number of Respondents		120	100

Table 2: Respondent's Opinion Regarding the Alternative Therapy Treatment Adopted by his Family Members

Answer	Frequency	%	Sum%
Yes	40	33.333	33.333
No	80	66.667	100
Categories 2 , Mean: 1.66667, SD: 0.47338		120 cases	100%

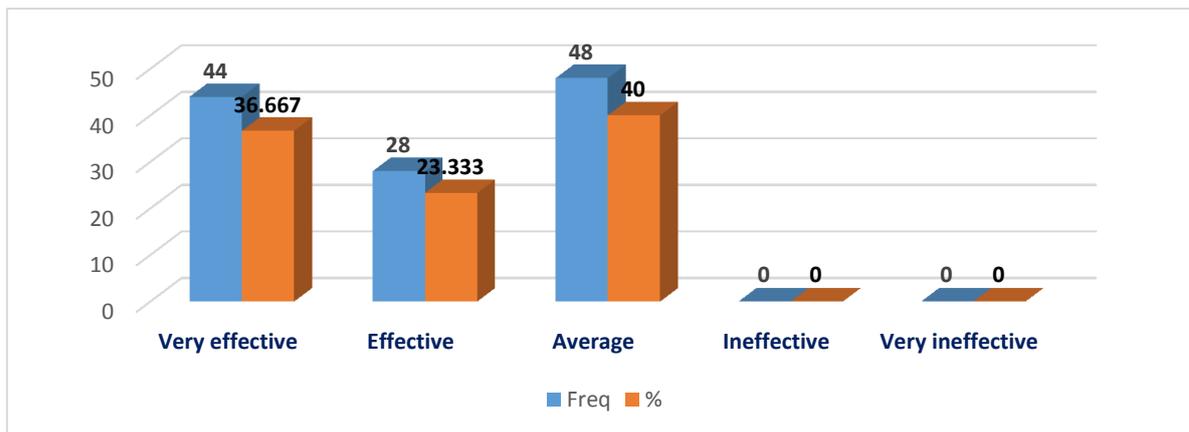
Figure 1: Respondents Opinion, Regarding the Effectiveness of The CAM/ Alternative Medicine:

Figure 2: Opinion Regarding The Effectiveness of (Cam) Treatment With Ailments

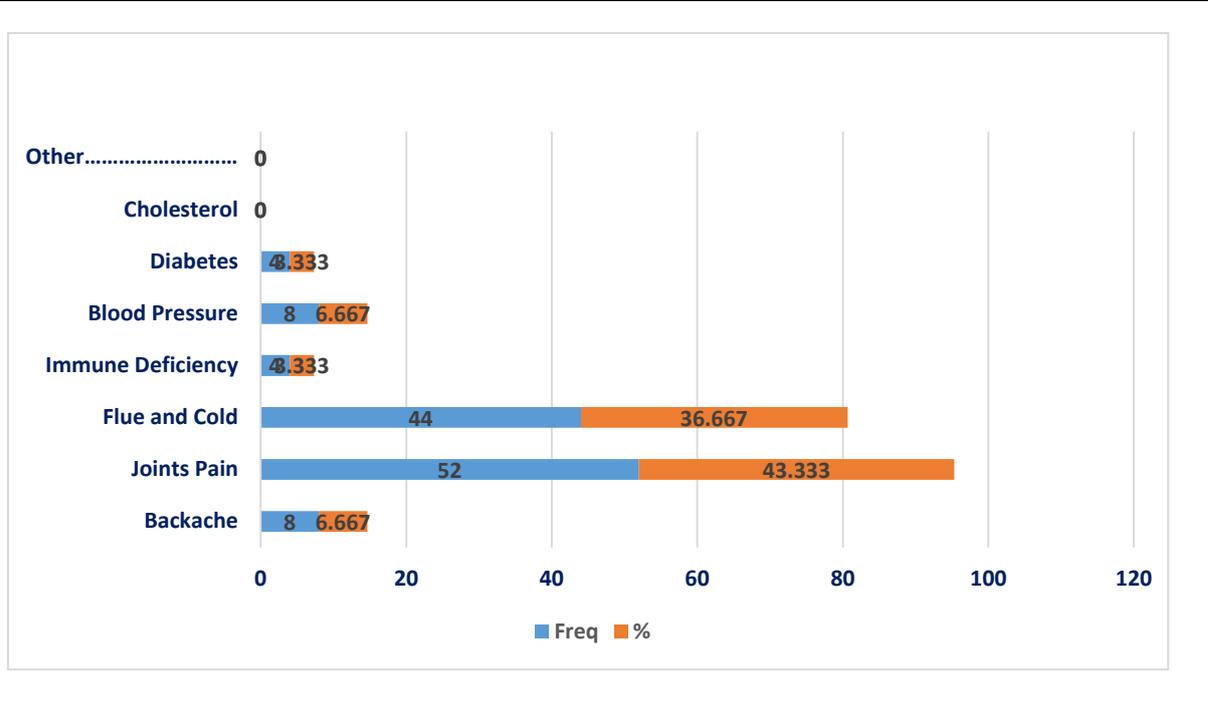


Figure 3: Opinion Regarding The Preference Of This (CAM) Treatment as Compare to Modern Treatment

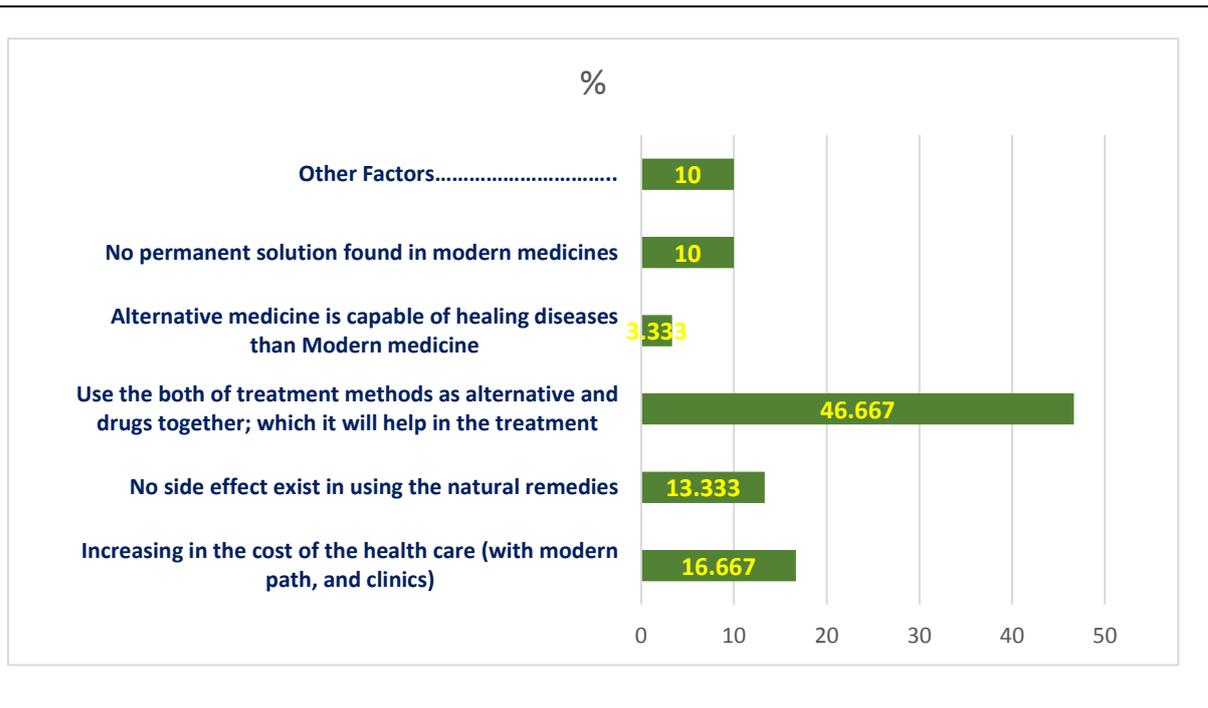
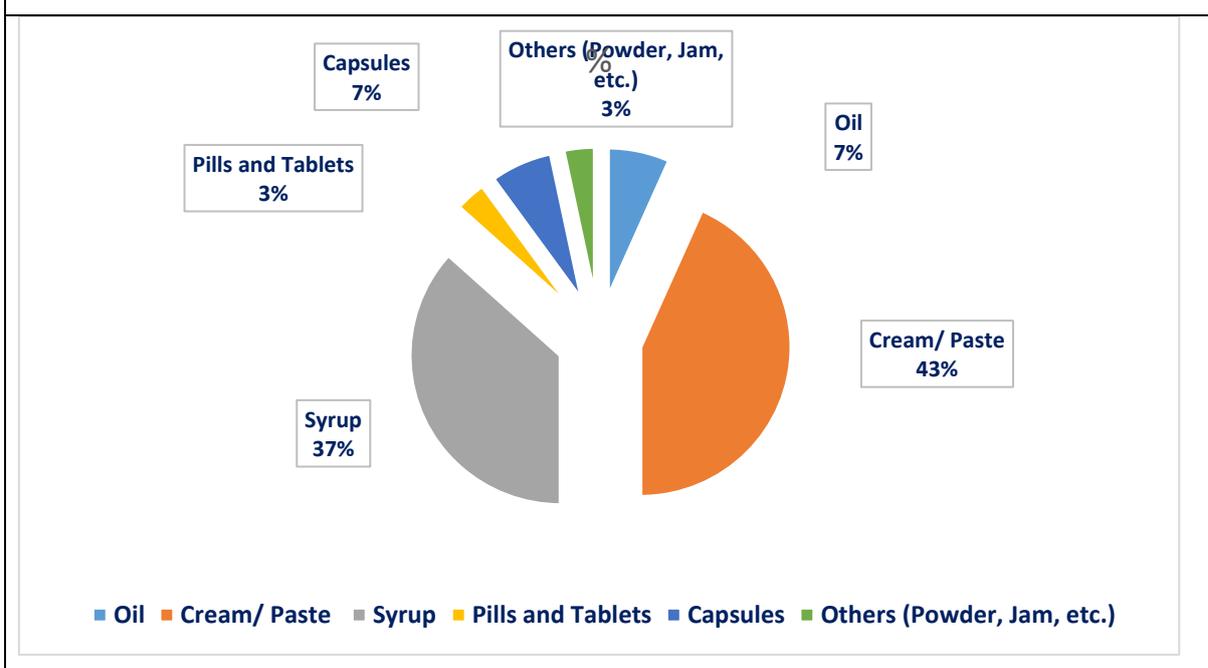


Figure 4: Preferable Form of Alternative Medicine Product

Regarding the age of the participant's majority, belong to less than 30 years of age that is 90% of the sample population. The rest 7% were between 30-40 years followed by the 40-50 (3%) respectively. Around 92% of them were female and only 28% of the respondents were male. Of the participants, 53.33% had bachelor's degree while only 13.33% had intermediate 10% had elementary and 8% of the respondents were stated that they are uneducated (See Table- 1). Participants of this study expressed their views regarding the adoption of alternative medicines in his family in this respect majority 67% indicated that their family did not adopt ever to this therapy however, 33% were positive that their family have adopted alternative therapy (CAM/ Herbal Medicines) for the treatment. This is at least good sign of awareness and trust regarding the alternative therapy in the region (See Table 2).

The study was to understand consumer perception of CAM products in Saudi Arabia with particular reference to herbal medicines. The research study was carried out using three overall objectives. The attributes suggested by the respondent to use herbal products are prepared from the natural ingredient, free from the side effect, fit for health and non-chemical. Most of the respondents mentioned herbal products are made from natural element so; they faced no side effect (Kumar & Janagam, 2011). From the figure 1, it is

indicated that perception regarding the alternative medicines for the treatment is very positive as is observed that majority hundred percent people feel that alternative medications are beneficial for the treatment of ailments. The attitudes towards herbal products (measured on a five-point Likert scale) respondent agreed with most of the statement. it was indicating that respondent hold a positive attitude towards herbal products. Regarding the effectiveness of alternative treatment with ailments, it was observed that respondents agreed on that this treatment is beneficial for joints pain (43.33%) followed by flue and cold 36.67 %, backache and blood pressure 8% both and diabetes as well as immune deficiency treatment were 3. 33%. (Figure 2).

The reason for the choosing and selection of CAM / herbal treatment as compared to modern medicines, the majority claim that they were using some time both of the therapy. That helps to quick response on the cure of ailments followed by claiming that allopath treatment costly (16.5%), no side effect existing in natural treatment (13.33%) and no permanent solution with modern medicines and other factors were the cause to select this treatment (See Figure 3). Majority of respondents declared that the paste/ cream form of the herbaceous product (43%) were preferable followed by Syrup (37%), Capsules and oil represent equally (7%), and Tablets and another form (3%) were preferred each respectively (Figure 4).

5. Conclusion:

In the study majority were below the 30 years of age as this study was conducted with convenience methods of sampling. Moreover, majority of them belongs to the Bachelor degree and the highest majority of the respondents were female. Regarding the adoption of alternative medicines with in the family member's majority indicates that their family did not adopt ever to this therapy however, there were positive feedback that one third of the respondents' family member were engaged and used/ adopted alternative therapy (CAM/ Herbal Medicines) for the treatment. This is at least good signal of awareness and trust regarding the alternative therapy in the region. Despite the high provision of herbal remedies through community pharmacies in Saudi Arabia, majority respondents believe that herbal products were a useful therapeutic option and a considerable proportion of people thought they natural and safe in use. The attitude of the respondents towards herbal/ nutritional supplements and alternative medicines are confident with a high percentage, being of the opinion that they are useful, natural and safe. There are a high level and very

positive perception regarding the alternative medicines for the treatment of the respondents. Regarding the effectiveness of alternative treatment for ailments, it is perceived that this treatment is beneficial for joints pain followed by flue and cold, backache and blood pressure both and diabetes. The majority pretend that they use some time both of the therapy because that helps to quick response on the cure of ailments followed by claiming that allopath treatment costly, no side effect existing in natural treatment and no permanent solution with modern medicines and other factors are the cause to select this treatment. The paste/ cream form of the herbal product is highly preferable followed by Syrup, Capsules and oil represent respectively. It is therefore, recommended from this study that since such a high proportion of the populace use CAM, that at the local, state and national levels government should find acceptable ways of incorporating their use in the region. The hospital should focus to open the department of CAM-related to specific problems that are highly perceived useful and highly acceptable by the respondents. The supplier should centre to prepare the natural product form in paste/ cream form, Syrup, Capsules and oil as per the suitable ailments and age bases. Besides respondents need to be better informed about herbal products, which are seeking alternative remedies for chronic health problems and especially those using both treatment for cure.

References:

1. Alam Mohammad Zulfeequar, "Herbal Medicines", Ashish Publishing House (APH), Daryagunj, New Delhi- India, 2008. ISBN Number: 8131303586, 9788131303580, 978-8131303580. pp 26-29, 2008.
2. Alam Mohammad Zulfeequar and Shamim Ahmad, "Consumer Preferences in Herbal Medicines" "National Symposium on Emerging Trends in Indian Medicinal Plants" Proceedings, held in Lucknow, India on 10-12 Oct 2003.
3. AlBedah MN, El-Olemy A, Khalil MK, "Knowledge, attitude and practice of public in Riyadh region, Saudi Arabia, about complementary and alternative medicine," Egypt J Community Med. Vol 28: pp.39–52, 2010.
4. AlBedah, A. M., Khalil, M. K., Elolemy, A. T., Al Mudaiheem, A. A., Al Eidi, S., Al-Yahia, O. A., ... & Henaryc, B. Y, "The use of and out-of-pocket spending on complementary and alternative medicine in Qassim province, Saudi Arabia", Annals of Saudi Medicine, Vol 33-3, pp282, 2013.

5. Al-Faris E, Al-Rowais N, Mohamed AG, Al-Rukban MO, Al-Kurdi A, Al-Noor MA, et al. , “Prevalence and pattern of alternative medicine use: The results of a household survey”, *Ann Saudi Med.* Vol 28, pp 4–10, 2008.
6. Al-Rowais, N. A., “Herbal medicine in the treatment of diabetes mellitus”, *Saudi medical journal*, Vol 23-11, pp 1327-1331, 2002.
7. Barnes PM, Bloom B, Nahin RL. Hyattsville, MD, “Complementary and alternative medicine use among adults and children”, National Center for Health Statistics, United States., Report No.12, 2008.
8. Bodeker G, Ong CK, Grundy C, Burford G, Shein K., “WHO global atlas of traditional, complementary and alternative medicine”, Text and Map Volumes World Health Organization Center for Health Development. Kobe: WHO Global Atlas of Traditional, Complementary and Alternative Medicine, 2005.
9. Cahill, P., “Complementary and Alternative Medicine”, Larsen and Keller Educ, pp67, 2017.
10. E. Mathew, J. Muttappallymyalil, J. Sreedharan, L.J. John, J. John, M. Mehboob, A.Mathew, “Self-reported use of complementary and alternative medicine among the health care consumers at a Tertiary Care Center in Ajman, United Arab Emirates”, *Ann Med Health Sci Res*, 3 (2), pp. 215-219, 2013. DOI: 10.4103/2141-9
11. F.A. Al Braik, P.M. Rutter, D. BrownA, “Cross-sectional survey of herbal remedy”, taking by United Arab Emirate (UAE) citizens in Abu Dhabi *Pharmacoepidemiol. Drug Safety.* Vol 17, pp. 725-732, 2008.
12. Greene, J. A., “Generic: The unbranding of modern medicine”, Baltimore, Maryland Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 21, 2016.
13. Holmes, T., and Cherniak, E. P., “Complementary medicine and culture: The changing cultural territory of local and global healing practices. New York”, Nova Science Publishers, Inc., pp. 88, 2017.
14. Jazieh, A. R., Al Sudairy, R., Abulkhair, O., Alaskar, A., Al Safi, F., Sheblaq, N.,&Tamim, H., “Use of complementary and alternative medicine by patients with cancer in Saudi Arabia”, *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, Vol 18-11, pp 1045-1049,2012.
15. Jones, K., “Complementary and alternative medicine sourcebook, Detroit,”MI :Omnigraphics, Inc., pp. 244-278, 2016.
16. Kelner, M., and Wellman, B., “Complementary and Alternative Medicine: Challenge and Change”, Hoboken: Routledge, pp. 56, 2014.

17. Kumar, M. R., & Janagam, D., "Export and Import Pattern of Medicinal Plants in India". *Indian Journal of Science and Technology*, Vol IV-3, pp 245-248, March 2011.
18. Mohamed N. Al-Arifi, "Availability and needs of herbal medicinal information resources at community pharmacy, Riyadh region, Saudi Arabia", *Saudi Pharmaceutical Journal*, Volume 21-4, pp 351-360, 2013.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsps.2012.11.004>
19. Parker, S., "Medicine: The definitive illustrated history", New York : DK Publishing, pp. 90, 2016.
20. R.M. Al-Kindi, M. Al-Mushrafi, M. Al-Rabaani, I. Al-akwani, "Complementary and alternative medicine use among adults with Diabetes in Muscat Region, Oman," *Sultan Qaboos Univ Med J*, Vol 11-1, pp. 62-68, Feb 2011.
21. Rahman, M. A., Mossa, J. S., Al-Said, M. S., & Al-Yahya, M. A., "Medicinal plant diversity in the flora of Saudi Arabia", a report on seven plant families. *Fitoterapia*, Vol 75-2, pp149-161, 2004.
22. Saydah SH, Eberhardt MS., "Use of complementary and alternative medicines among adults with chronic disease United States", *J Altern Complement Med.*, 12:805–12., 2006.
23. Synovitz, L. B., and Larson, K. L., "Complementary and alternative medicine for health professionals: A holistic approach to consumer health. Burlington," MA: Jones and Bartlett Learning, pp. 45, 2013.
24. United Nations Report, "United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Systems and National Experiences for protecting Traditional Knowledge, Innovations and Practices. Background Note by the UNCTAD Secretariat", Geneva, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2000. (document reference TD/B/COM.1/EM.13/2) from: <http://unctad.org/en/docs/c1em13d2.en.pdf>
25. Xue CC, Zhang AL, Lin V, Da Costa C, Story DE, "Complementary and alternative medicine use in Australia: A national population-based survey", *J Altern Complement Med*; Vol13, pp 643–50, 2007.
26. Z.M. Siti, A. Tahir, A.I. Farah, S.M. Fazlin, S. Sondi, A.H. Azman, A.H. Maimunah, M.A. Haniza, M.D. Siti Haslinda, A.K. Zulkarnain, I. Zakiah, W.C. Zaleha, "Use of traditional and complementary medicine in Malaysia: a baseline study Complement", *The Med*, Vol17 -5, pp. 292-299, 2009.
DOI:10.1016/j.ctim.2009.04.002