

# TOWARDS INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE IN EUROPE

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WHERE THE WORLDS OF BIOMEDICINE AND CAM MEET  
or  
BEING DIFFERENT AS HINDRANCE OR BENEFIT

# Essential questions

- Who wants integration?
- Do we want integration in the first place?
- What are the pros and cons?
- How should integration look like?
- Is CAM an alternative to mainstream medicine?
- Is CAM complementary to mainstream medicine?
- Is Integrative Medicine the final answer?

# Alternative medicine?

- Alternative medicine as a complete alternative to mainstream medicine?
- Or as an alternative in certain medical conditions?
- A rather ambiguous terminology
- Mainstream medical community could be offended.
- New term: complementary medicine.

# Complementary medicine?

- 'Complementary medicine' does not substitute but completes mainstream medicine, expanding it to include areas it has undervalued.
- Mainstream medicine is standard, 'Complementary medicine' technically 'complementing' biomedicine, not considered as a legitimate healing system.
- Or may the holistic approach be superior to the reductionist approach of biomedicine?

# Integrative medicine?

- Restoration of the focus of medicine on health and healing, emphasizes the centrality of the doctor-patient relationship.
- Focus on preventive maintenance of health by attention to all relative components of lifestyle.
- Use of all appropriate therapeutic approaches, conventional and CAM
- Patients being active participants in their health care
- Physicians viewing patients as whole persons

# Integrative medicine?

- On what basis are decisions made between competing worldviews and standards of evidence?
- How are multiple biomedical and CAM therapies combined?
- What therapy types are chosen and utilised?
- How do biomedical and CAM therapies mutually interact?
- In what types of healthcare settings is IM implemented?
- How do biomedical and CAM healthcare professionals interact with each other?

# Need for distinction

- CAM is not solely a set of clinical interventions. The essential difference lies in the underlying paradigms, attitudes, and values.
- Supporting innate regenerative capabilities of the organism versus fixing a fault in the physicochemical machine.
- Strengthening the home forces versus destroying the enemy.
- Healing originating within the patient versus curing by the physician.

# Is integration possible?

- Conventional and CAM/holistic medicine seem to have conflicting, 'incommensurable' paradigms
- Can they be integrated into one unified paradigm?
- Integration is a two-sided process, i.e. "combining two elements into an integral whole, with full respect to the other party".

# Integration or assimilation?

- There is no equality in medicine.
- Conventional medicine is firmly entrenched in society and supported by the government, whereas CAM is usually not.
- The politically dominant 'larger unit', i.e. conventional Western medicine, carries the values, culture and conceptual framework into which it expects the 'smaller unit', i.e. CAM, to assimilate.
- Risk: CAM approaches stripped down to being no more than alternative therapeutic modalities.

# Integration or co-existence

- Parallels with gender equality, the position of men versus the position of women.
- The male dominance and men's prejudiced belief of superiority.
- Also women's more concealed belief of superiority.
- The struggle of women to be accepted as equals in dignity.
- The attempts of feminists to behave as men instead of developing their feminine power.

# Integration or co-existence

- How to get rid of our beliefs of superiority or inferiority?
- How to meet each other with mutual respect as equals in dignity?
- This difference can even be even stimulating, energising and vitalising.
- Can you see the other sex as equal in dignity and different at the same time?
- Without feeling superior or inferior?

# Integration or co-existence

- Can you see the other medical paradigm as equal in dignity and different at the same time?
- Without feeling superior or inferior?
- If you can, the real dialogue can start and a respectful and mutually stimulating co-existence can develop.

VIVE LA DIFFÉRENCE!