Executive Summary Of Public Perceptions About Alternative Medicine In Angel, London

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Abstract: This study intends to investigate public perceptions about alternative medicine and common types of alternative medicines used in London. In particular, the study attempts to identify the general public’s expectations which can effect on alternative medical practice in Angel, London and to generally investigate whether people turn to use alternative medicine or not. This is a questionnaire based research survey using participants randomly selected in Angel, London. The sample group was 100 and the questionnaire contains both quantitative and qualitative questions. 100 questionnaires were collected from the sample group, which consists of 55% European, 22% Asian, 12% African and 11% other nationalities. There were 7 age groups mentioned in the questioner and most of the participants were in 25-34 year age group (31 participants), 56% female and 44% male were participated to the study. Around 47% have used different type of alternative or herbal things in their life time, 53% have not used anything. People who used alternative medicine mentioned that those include Chinese medicine, Acupuncture, massage therapy, homeopathy, herbal tea, herbal cosmetic products and their own country traditional medicines. 53% of participants like to use alternative in future and 47% of participants do not like to use any alternative medicine. Around 29% knows about alternative medicines in other countries, and those mainly include India, China and German, however 71% do not know. About 34% and 23% preferred professional qualifications and academic qualifications of alternative medical practitioner. Most of the people mentioned that registration certificate as a responsible place in the UK, feedback from previous clients; qualified staff and cleanliness of the place are the factors influencing their preference for alternative practicing place. According to the hypothesis testing accept alternative hypothesis, and reject null hypothesis. Hence, it can be concluded as people are turn to use alternative medicine.

Keywords: Alternative medicine, Herbal medicine, Massage therapy, UK registration

1. Introduction
There is a new trend in the society to use herbal, complementary and alternative medicines. In the UK, there are different types of alternative and complementary medicine practicing everywhere, and it is developing as a business. There are different alternative medical practitioners, professional organizations, academic qualifications offering at different institutes and a few universities in the UK. National health system of the UK uses complementary practices in the NHS hospitals as well. Therefore this research selects the field of alternative medicine in London. The main aim of this paper is to identify the public perceptions about alternative medicine in Angel, London. Other objectives are to identify different types of alternative medicines practicing in London, to investigate type of qualifications and the type of qualities that the public is expecting from the alternative medical practitioners and practicing places, to identify communication issues, consumer behavior, business background and opportunities, responsiveness, attitudes and sensitiveness to the alternative medicine in London. The hypothesis (H1) of this research survey was “people turn to use alternative medicines, in Angle, London” and the null-hypothesis (H0) is “people not use alternative medicine in Angel, London”.

2. Methodology
This was a questionnaire based research survey using randomly selected participants in Angel, London. The sample group was 100 and the questionnaire contains both quantitative and qualitative questions. Verbal consent was taken prior to the survey and data was analyzed using Microsoft excel.

3. Results and Discussion
According to collected data 55% of participants European, 22% of participant’s Asian, 12% participants African and 11% others. According to the findings, maximum percentage of participants European, that is 55% because the place where collated data is residential area with majority of European people living that area. But there is a good combination of lot of nationalities, because instead of Asian and African, there is other 11% as well. Some people mentioned their nationality as Chicness, Dual-Jamaican, Burmese and some people not mentioned it in other category. There were 7 age groups mentioned in the questioner and most of the participants were in 25-34 year age group (31 participants). 56% female and 44% male were participated to the study. According to the results and finding of use of alternative medicine only 47% people used it, but that was for several reasons, not only as medicine, just for relaxing, as food supplement and as herbal cosmetics. Their family or friends also used alternatives only 40%, but people who used it response their comments about it as excellent 3%, good 85%, none comment 9% and not effective 3%. It shows that people who used alternative medicine, they were happy about it with good comments. Finally, the data which collected for question number 9 and 10 is important to alternative medical practice in London. It shows what type of factors people expecting from the alternative medical practitioner and from the alternative medical clinic/place. Professional qualification, academic qualification and UK registration as a practitioner are mostly concerning from the practitioners. Registration certificate as a responsible place
and feedbacks from previous clients are the identified most concerning factors from alternative medical place/clinic. Least concerning factors are English communication skills, reasonable price and medical claiming. This finding shows that how much people consider about their health and safety, reputation, laws and regulations and responsible factors. According to the hypothesis testing accept alternative hypothesis, and reject null hypothesis. Hence, it can be concluded as people are turn to use alternative medicine

4. Conclusion
People mainly mentioned about herbal medicine, massage therapy, acupuncture, Chinese medicine and herbal tea at the relevant section of questioner. People who used alternative medicine mainly mentioned Chinese medicine, massage therapy and herbal medicine. The families and friends of those people who mentioned were also mainly used; either herbal medicine or homeopathy as an alternative medicine. Therefore, herbal medicine, massage therapy, Chinese medicine, acupuncture and homeopathy could be identified as common types of alternative medical therapies. Identified common types of alternative medicines are herbal medicine, massage therapy, Chinese medicine, acupuncture and homeopathy. Secondly, the findings indicated that 53% people like to use alternative medicine in future, tor identified that there is a trend in the society to alternative medicines. However/But there is an issue with communication and advertising. According to their responses, they knew about alternative medicine either word to word or via a family or friend. Only two of them were mentioned that they knew via advertisement and internet. This shows the huge gap in communication, advertising and promotion in the field of alternative medicine in London. Although there are some professional associations and NHS practice the traditional medical systems (massages, acupuncture etc.) in UK but still doesn’t promote it to general public. The factor which I identified is limited advertising, I couldn’t find any television advertisements; However some practitioners using local radio channels and newspapers to advertise. On the other hand, it was very less idea about alternative medicine used in other parts of the world, except UK. 71% people responded as “no idea” and other knew very few countries those who practice alternative medicine well. This is also one side of communication and advertising in to global world. There is a trend in here but there is huge gap in between communications in this alternative medical field. Thirdly, should be mentioned about the factors which highlighted according to their expectations. People mainly need scientific explanations for these types of treatments. Therefore, they prone towards external alternative medical treatments only. Such as massage and acupuncture, scientific evidence will provide a path for them to practice alternative medicine both internally and externally. Next, the important identification of public perception about alternative medical practitioner, most people concern about professional qualifications and academic qualification. Very least amount of people considering about English communication skill, but in English speaking country this is an important factor. According to findings that is not an essential factor to the field of alternative medical practice in Angel, London. The final factor that I had identified was the concern of people was the place or clinic where alternative treatments are taking place in London. Certification of Registration is the main thing they consider in those places, which in turn indicates the health and safety of the premises, because, it is not easy to register a clinic in London because of their health and safety rules and regulations. Other than this people mentioned feedbacks from previous clients, qualified staff and cleanliness and tidiness of the place.

5. Recommendations
1. Need more research’s and surveys to identify the gaps in the field of alternative medicine, especially in communication and advertising sector.  
2. Have to develop scientific research and clinical research to prove advantages and disadvantages of alternative medicine with scientific evidence.  
3. Develop the alternative medicine education awareness programmes among general public.  
4. Through NHS can start use of other alternative medicines as an experimental level, and according to results they can start introducing it.

References

Author Profile

1 received the Bachelor of Ayurveda medicine and Surgery degree in 2011 with Second class from University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. Then I received Business management degree in 2015 with Second class from Glyndwr University, United Kingdom. During 2011-2016 I worked at private Ayurveda clinics in Sri Lanka and London. Since 2016 to 2019 I worked as a Government Medical Officer at Nildandahinha Ayurveda Hospital, Sri Lanka. Currently I am working at Aparekka Ayurveda Hospital in Sri Lanka, as a Community Medical Officer.