

Do patients want complementary and alternative treatments and will they pay cash for them?

March 27 2017



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While complementary, alternative, and integrative medicine treatments such as acupuncture and massage therapy are usually offered in outpatient settings, a new study has shown that the majority of hospitalized patients perceived such integrative services to be helpful. The study, which also examined whether patients would pay out of their own pockets for these services, is published in *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*.

In the article entitled "Inpatients' Preferences, Beliefs, and Stated Willingness to Pay for Complementary and Alternative Medicine Treatments," Lori Montross-Thomas, PhD and coauthors from University of California, San Diego (UCSD), UCSD Moores Cancer Center, UCSD Center for Integrative Medicine, and True Wellness Acupuncture, San Diego, CA identify the complementary and alternative services a group of adult [patients](#) perceived to be the most helpful. The authors also report on which integrative services the patients would agree to pay for and how the patients believed the treatments would benefit them.

The complementary services considered included acupuncture, aromatherapy, art therapy, guided imagery, healthy food, humor therapy, [massage therapy](#), music therapy, pet [therapy](#), Reiki, and stress management. For all therapies but one, a majority of patients considered the treatments helpful and across the board between 33-71% of patients expressed a willingness to pay cash.

"These findings should help all decision makers in value-based hospital systems that are seeking to enhance patient-experience and better understand costs and potential cost savings," says *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* Editor-in-Chief John Weeks, johnweeks-integrator.com, Seattle, WA.

More information: Lori P. Montross-Thomas et al, Inpatients' Preferences, Beliefs, and Stated Willingness to Pay for Complementary and Alternative Medicine Treatments, *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* (2017). [DOI: 10.1089/acm.2016.0288](https://doi.org/10.1089/acm.2016.0288)

Provided by Mary Ann Liebert, Inc

Citation: Do patients want complementary and alternative treatments and will they pay cash for them? (2017, March 27) retrieved 24 January 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-03-patients-complementary-alternative-treatments-cash.html>

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