

Turkish Journal of Medical Sciences

Turkish Journal

of

Medical Sciences

What Influences Herbal Medicine Use? - Prevalence and Related Factors

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Abstract: Aims: The use and cost of complementary/alternative medicine (CAM) has been gaining in importance worldwide. Herbal medicine is one of the most commonly used methods. To understand the effectiveness, reliability, and quality of CAM and provide standardization in its analysis, its prevalence and the factors influencing its use must be identified. This study was conducted to identify the prevalence of CAM use and the effective factors in our population. Materials and Methods: A stratified multistage probability sampling design was used in this cross-sectional, population-based study, which was conducted in Aydın. Participants were interviewed face to face by trained interviewers with a questionnaire. The answers for the open-ended questions were categorized. Univariate and multiple (backward Wald) logistic regression and chi-square test were used for the statistical analysis. A P value <0.05 was considered as statistically significant. Results: Totally, 873 people completed the questionnaire; 539 (61.7%) were female, 334 (38.3%) were male. Fifty-eight percent of the participants (n: 511) reported that they had used a CAM method at least once in the previous year. More than half of the participants had used herbal medicine (55.4%), and the most commonly used herb was lime (n: 426, 88.1%). The reasons for the use of herbal medicine were mostly for prevention and for treatment. In the previous year, 233 (26.7%) of the participants stated that they had applied one of the CAM methods as a treatment for their children. Health status perception, being a non-smoker and belief that "CAM was superior to conventional medicine" were determined as the factors that influenced CAM use. Conclusions: CAM, especially herbal medicine, is commonly used in our population, and individuals use these methods not only for themselves but also for their children.

Key Words: Complementary medicine, alternative medicine, herbal medicine, prevalence

Turk J Med Sci 2008; 38(5): 455-463.

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Other articles published in the same issue: [Turk J Med Sci, vol.38,iss.5.](#)