

# Study on integrative medicine in military health finds extensive offerings, widespread use

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JACM provides observational, clinical, and scientific reports and commentary intended to help healthcare professionals, delivery organization leaders, and

scientists evaluate and integrate therapies into patient care protocols and research strategies. Credit: Mary Ann Liebert, Inc., publishers

A new study evaluating the use of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) across the military health system shows that the large majority of military treatment facilities offer at least one type of CAM, and an estimated 76,000 military patients receive integrative health services each month. The comprehensive, system-wide study entitled "Complementary and Alternative Medicine Services in the Military Health System" is published in JACM, *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*.

Coauthors Patricia Herman, ND, PhD, RAND Corp. (Santa Monica, CA), Melony Sorbero, PhD, RAND Corp. (Pittsburgh, PA), and Ann Sims-Columbia, BSN, MHA, MBA, FACHE, San Antonio Military Medical Center (Fort Sam Houston, TX) present detailed data on the specific types of CAM offered in military treatment facilities across the military [health](#) system, the conditions for which they are used, and their level of use. The CAM modalities and practitioners were most commonly used to treat pain, relying most often on acupuncture and chiropractic, and for [mental health conditions](#), using mainly stress management/relaxation therapy and mind-body [medicine](#) combinations.

Dr. Herman and colleagues note that not only are CAM service offerings at military treatment facilities increasing over time, but also the military health system is incorporating the use of integrated health services into its clinical practice guidelines.

"Military health facilities report that they are using these treatments because they've found that they work for specific conditions," says Dr. Patricia Herman, Senior Behavioral Scientist, RAND Corporation and an

Associate Editor of *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*." They are one more tool in the tool kit for dealing with issues like chronic pain, and they can offer an alternative to opioid drugs."

"An irony of the military's uptake of practices that 40 years ago were associated with the counter-culture," says JACM Editor-in-Chief John Weeks, johnweeks-integrator.com, Seattle, WA, "is that we may one day soon view this accrued experience as a source of soft technology transfer from the military to better integrate these pain and mental health practices in civilian healthcare."

**More information:** Patricia M. Herman et al, Complementary and Alternative Medicine Services in the Military Health System, *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* (2017). [DOI: 10.1089/acm.2017.0236](https://doi.org/10.1089/acm.2017.0236)

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