



European Congress  
for Integrative Medicine  
*Together with the*

## Integrative Medicine – Putting the Patient First

### Conventional vs. Complementary Medicine

The relationship between conventional medicine and alternative medical methods, or complementary medicine, is still fraught with mutual distrust, misunderstanding, and rejection. At least in the German healthcare system, there is little cooperation between the two schools of thought. Indeed, it might be more accurate to speak of an asymmetrical coexistence, for although universities are teaching and applying primarily conventional medical methods, the use of complementary medicine is already widespread in everyday ambulatory care. This contradictory situation makes it difficult for patients to receive the best possible medical attention, including the most promising combination of treatments.

Modern Western medicine, with its great technical and diagnostic achievements, has contributed enormously to improving the management of many diseases. Nevertheless, it would be short-sighted to limit ourselves exclusively to conventional treatments. An increasing number of patients are calling for a medical system with a stronger holistic approach, where the focus is no longer on managing symptoms, but on allowing individuals to play a more active role. This is likely one of the main reasons that the use of complementary medicine is becoming increasingly widespread. Although this trend does not verify the effectiveness of complementary medicine, it does show that there is a considerable need among patients and doctors to expand the range of treatment options, especially in cases of chronic or terminal disease.

The term 'complementary medicine' describes a variety of theoretical and practical approaches that are not considered part of conventional, scientifically established medical practice. Most complementary treatments share a concept of humankind that extends beyond the somatic level and derives from anthroposophical findings and long-standing cultural traditions. Unlike conventional medicine, complementary methods focus on supporting processes that our own bodies set in motion to combat illness. Healing in this context means not just eliminating symptoms, but also learning from the disease itself.

### Integrative Medicine – Intermediary Between the Systems

In light of the factors described above, integrative medicine has clearly come to play an important role in medical care, serving as a bridge between conventional and complementary medical approaches and providers. The goal of integrative medicine is to bring these two seemingly contrary systems

### Deutscher Kongress für Integrative Medizin

November 7-8, 2008

#### Open day

November 9, 2008

#### Location

ICC Berlin  
Neue Kantstraße | Ecke Messedamm  
D-14055 Berlin  
Germany

#### Congress president

Prof. Stefan N. Willich, MPH MBA

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closer together and to explore the possibilities, and the limits, of the different methods and the potential of mutual cooperation. Viewing the patient as an individual is the main focus of integrative medicine. Combining conventional and complementary methods of treatment is expected to bring significant improvements to medical care and quality of life.

## Introducing Research Into Everyday Clinical Practice

The Institute for Social Medicine, Epidemiology and Health Economics at the Charité University Medical Center in Berlin has become a leader in the field of integrative medicine, conducting a broad range of studies on complementary treatment methods over the past decade. The institute is also dedicated to educating the next generation of scientists and physicians. As part of their regular medical studies at the institute, students may supplement their theoretical courses by choosing from a range of required electives, including health economics and complementary medicine. Other core requirements allow the students to become familiar with current developments in healthcare systems and public health, including social medicine and epidemiology.

In addition to its research and teaching activities, the institute provides direct clinical care. In 2007, after ten years of intensive research, the institute opened an outpatient clinic for disease prevention and integrative medicine (CHAMP). The primary aim of the clinic is to translate the results of scientific research into everyday clinical practice, leading to the most modern and comprehensive medical care available today. In the walk-in clinic, conventional Western medical treatments are combined with other approaches such as naturopathy, traditional Chinese medicine, and homeopathy. Scientific methods are applied to find the best possible therapy with the least number of side effects for each individual patient.

By fostering this cooperation between medical research and integrated medical care, the Institute for Social Medicine, Epidemiology and Health Economics is helping establish international standards for the design of methodologically sophisticated clinical trials on complementary medicine treatments. In this way, the institute is playing a key role in the development of integrative medicine – and striving always to put the patient first.

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