

[IMAGE]

Head Toward Alternative Medicine

Many people suffer from chronic headache pain, despite a wide variety of treatment options. Those who find relief through drugs often must deal with negative side effects. Complementary and alternative medicines, or CAM therapies, are increasingly being considered by those who cannot find symptom relief elsewhere.

Seventy-three severe headache patients at an outpatient head/neck pain clinic in New York were recently interviewed about their knowledge, use, and opinions about CAM. Researchers found that 85% of the patients used some form of alternative therapy for their headaches, and 60% claimed the therapies benefited their pain. Nearly 90% of the sufferers thought some form of CAM treatment would be effective for headache pain. The following represent some of the most-used CAM therapies for headache, based on patient response:

- massage (42%);
- exercise (30%);
- acupuncture (19%);
- chiropractic (15%); and
- herbs (15%).

If you suffer from headaches or other conditions that don't respond adequately to standard medical care, consider some form of CAM therapy. Be careful, however, as not all forms of alternative therapy are proven safe or effective. Research any form of treatment before you consider using it, and ask your doctor of chiropractic about its validity.

Reference:

Von Peter S, Ting W, Scrivani S, et al. Survey on the use of complementary and alternative medicine among patients with headache syndromes. *Cephalgia* 2002;22, pp. 395-400.

To learn more about head and neck pain, go to <http://www.chiroweb.com/find/archives/musculoskeletal>.

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