Minutes of the meeting of the EP CAM INTEREST GROUP

European Parliament, Brussels 12 April 2011, 12.00 – 14.00 pm

Topic: "Healthy Ageing, chronic disease management and potential contribution of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) in these areas".

The meeting was hosted and chaired by MEP Marian Harkin, Ireland. Mr Jorge Pinto Antunes, Unit Strategy and Analysis, presented the position of EU Commission/DG SANCO; Dr Ton Nicolai, President ECH, and Seamus Connolly, President EFCAM, presented the position of all European umbrella organizations of patients, doctors and practitioners, closely collaborating in EUROCAM. EUROCAM provided for the participants of the meeting and for the MEPs a general background paper about CAM and healthy ageing for the participants of the meeting and for the MEPs (see attachment).

In her introduction, MEP Marian Harkin pointed to the fact that "Healthy Ageing" is the flagship topic of the EU health policy in 2011. She underlined that CAM modalities with their holistic and integrative approaches to health care have much to offer for a healthy ageing policy in the EU and expressed the wish that these approaches will be taken up in the framework of the European Healthy Ageing Innovation Partnership (EHAIP). The target of the meeting was to make decision makers in the EU Parliament and other EU institutions aware about the added value of CAM to Healthy Ageing.

Mr Pinto Antunes gave an overview of EU health policy in general and the aims and priorities of EU 2020 as well as the EHAIP. He explained the framework of the EHAIP and the Steering Group set up to lead the partnership, and invited CAM Stakeholders to contact the Steering Group and to participate with concrete projects in the partnership (see attachment).

In his presentation Dr Ton Nicolai outlined the differences between the conventional and holistic models of health and disease, the use of CAM by the population, the evidence for the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of CAM, the benefits of CAM, especially for chronic disease management and disease prevention in the ageing population. He emphasized the importance of focusing on supporting peoples' resources and capacity to create and maintain health rather than only focusing on risks, ill health, and disease (see attachment).

Mr Seamus Connolly emphasized the importance of maintaining health and treating illness in an individualized way where the focus is on salutogenesis – i.e. factors that support human health and wellbeing –, and sustainable safe treatment of illness. He explained that CAM supports healthy ageing by motivating healthy lifestyle change, improving health literacy, offering less invasive, safer and less costly treatments for chronic illness and a cohort of health professionals who can deliver such benefits.

The discussion started with questions seeking information about the EU health policy and the Healthy Ageing Innovation Partnership as well as general questions about CAM approaches to health and healing.

In a general exchange of views on how to better integrate CAM into the public health policies at the EU and the national level, it was pointed out that advocacy for CAM at the EU level has to be intensified and the understanding of CAM and its added value for public health has to be developed step by step. The chaotic legal situation for the practice of CAM and availability of CAM medicinal

products in the EU member states was mentioned. Participants pointed as well to the unsatisfactory legal situation of the herbal medicinal products in the EU and the new policy in the UK taken as an example of a way forward.

It was agreed to make the presentations and the general paper of CAM on Healthy Ageing available to all MEPs and have the next CAM Interest Group Meeting in the autumn of 2011.

29 persons participated in the meeting (see attendance list).

Attachments:

Document: Healthy Ageing: chronic disease prevention and management and the potential contribution of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) in these areas
Presentation by Mr Pinto Antunes
Presentation by Dr Ton Nicolai
Presentation by Mr Seamus Connolly

Healthy Ageing: chronic disease prevention and management and the potential contribution of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) in these areas

This document reflects the position of the alliance of European umbrella organisations of patients, physicians and practitioners in the field of Complementary and Alternative Medicine, EUROCAM.

Healthy Ageing Context

- By 2025 about one-third of Europe's population will be aged 60 years and over and there will be a particularly rapid increase in the number of people 80 years and older.
- Many people are living longer, in part because healthcare has become more proficient at treating infectious diseases and acute episodes. But this approach at best offers disease management at increasingly unsustainable cost.
- As far as State services-including pensions and health and social care are concerned, ageing is already a burden they are ill equipped to cope with.
- European societies need healthy people living longer and productive lives but the pathways to achieve this goal rely on out-dated models of social and work participation and healthcare provision
- Without a sea change in strategic awareness and action in relation to achieving Healthy Ageing, the burden may become intolerable.

Vision

"Healthy ageing is the process of optimising opportunities for physical, social and mental health to enable older people to take part in society without discrimination and to enjoy an independent and good quality of life" [1]

CAM can contribute to this vision by:

1) Improving health maintenance, health literacy and supporting self-care
2) Prevention of illness
3) More personally and financially sustainable treatment methods for chronic diseases
4) Integration of the services of a large cohort of CAM health workers currently operating outside formal health systems
5) Retraining of existing healthcare workers in CAM holistic approaches to prevention and treatment

Health maintenance/prevention

- "The key issue is how to persuade people to change habits, especially, those who for cultural, social and/or economic reasons are least inclined to do so."
- "The potential health gains of a prevention programme are greater in the older population than among young people"
- "Even among older people, more health gain (i.e. productivity) can be achieved with a wider health promotion approach, rather than just preventative measures to tackle diseases." [1]

Studies show that CAM modalities are particularly helpful in motivating and supporting healthy lifestyle change helping people to maintain health and prevent illness.
Staying healthy and preventing disease requires the development of personal self-awareness and personal responsibility in citizens.

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[1] Healthy Ageing: A Challenge for Europe, Swedish Institute for Public Health Report 2007

An important and essential aid to achieving this awareness lies in being able to consult health practitioners with an understanding of how to motivate people to change lifestyle factors to support good health, as guides to understanding their situation and to choosing healthy options, rather than as a technical expert expected to 'fix' it.

A cohort of CAM health professionals is available to healthcare systems to bring this changed health agenda about i.e.:

- They can be offered additional training to prepare them to work within or alongside existing healthcare system staff
- Existing frontline health staff can similarly be offered re-training in working with patient's in a more holistic prevention focused approach

Health Inequalities

- The bulk of CAM is currently provided outside Member State healthcare provision, only those who can afford to pay for it potentially benefit from it.
- Research evidence shows that health maintenance is a primary reason for the use of CAM by those who can afford it.
- Statistics show that the better-off have better health.
- The potential added value of increasing the availability of CAM to ALL citizens would appear to be significant.
- Due to the uneven legal circumstances in which CAM is practised across the EU, patients are not able to access treatment equitably across Member States.
- The Healthy Ageing Innovation Partnership could include specific projects that could address this question in itself and contribute to the healthy ageing agenda.

What is Complementary and Alternative Medicine?

Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM)[2] straddles the gap between prevention - through lifestyle modifications - and the management and treatment interventions of conventional medicine. If lifestyle modifications, health psychology and/or mind-body techniques alone are not sufficient to restore health, full systems of CAM (complete systems of assessment and treatment) such as acupuncture, anthroposophic medicine, homeopathy, naturopathy, phytotherapy, reflexology or shiatsu and others are especially appropriate first options to support and induce the self-regenerating process of the person.

CAM's twin objectives of:

a) Maintaining health and treating illness in an individualised way where the focus is on

[2] It includes diverse health practices, approaches, knowledge and beliefs incorporating plant, animal, and/or mineral based medicines, spiritual therapies, manual techniques and exercises applied singularly or in combination to maintain well-being, as well as to treat, diagnose or prevent illness (WHO).

salutogenesis[3], and

b) Sustainable and safe treatment of illness;

are inherently geared to:

- fostering good health
- strengthening health for resistance to health threats
- supporting sustainable, safer and more cost-effective health delivery systems.

- Chronic disease prevention and management requires a patient-centred, holistic approach, which means fundamental changes in the organization and delivery of health care services.
- Complementary and Alternative Medicine is more appropriate in chronic disease prevention and management by restoring and supporting patients' own natural systems for fighting disease and maintaining health.
- CAM can help reduce the need of high cost, high-impact medical interventions and conventional prescription drugs and the long-term dependency on them.
- CAM is a safe treatment with hardly any adverse effects.
- CAM involves mostly low-cost, low-impact treatment and helps reduce cost burden due to iatrogenic illness resulting from adverse side effects
- CAM can help reduce the need for antibiotics, thus reducing the problem of anti-microbial resistance.
- CAM has a high patient satisfaction, increases patients' quality of life, and helps reduce absenteeism.
- There is increasing evidence for the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of CAM.
- Healthy Ageing requires a focus on societal health education, healthy lifestyles, and a reorientation of our existing primary and secondary care system.

A number of possible delivery models

- Extending the current primary care system to include the concept of salutogenesis, a focus on lifestyle modifications, and the holistic approach of complementary medicine. The current dual trained general practitioners prove the patient satisfaction and cost effectiveness of this possibility.
- Integrated Primary Care Health Centres focussing on prevention, self-care, lifestyle modifications, use of complementary therapies where possible, conventional treatment where necessary.
- Teams of conventional doctors, psychologists & psychotherapists, CAM physicians & practitioners, lifestyle coaches, nutritionists, mindfulness/yoga instructors, body work and art therapists.
- Parallel systems with interfaces for privately operating CAM practitioners and conventional care systems to work together for individuals
- This way healthcare becomes simpler, more effective and affordable.

Win-win situation

- For CAM users:
    - Citizens begin to regularly use CAM when awareness about the need to stay healthy and the onset of chronic illness tend to coincide, and when they are seeking methods to take care of their health in a positive and sustainable way.
    - User Satisfaction surveys report high levels of satisfaction and a range of benefits beyond the care of specific symptoms to those that promote health literacy, self

[3] Salutogenesis, the origin of health, is a concept which focuses on resources, maintains and improves the movement towards health.

responsibility for health and which motivate lifestyle change.

- For CAM professionals:
    - There is an obvious synergy between the underlying values and the practice objectives of the various CAM modalities and the key requirements of promoting healthy ageing.

- For the EU itself:
    - In the citizen satisfaction dividend of policy and programmes supported and/or funded by the Community.
    - The introduction of a change in approach to healthcare with short and long-term positive implications for currently spiralling healthcare budgets

Challenge and Opportunity

- The challenge of promoting healthy ageing will be to put *health itself* and health maintenance at the centre of Member State and EU policies, programmes, staff training and recruitment, service provision and organisation.
- For the proposed healthy ageing targets of the Innovation Partnership to be achieved, a paradigm shift in the provision of healthcare towards a health-centered health care will be necessary.
- Current gaps in healthcare service provision should be addressed through extending the system to include the concept of salutogenesis and the holistic approach of CAM, with the integration of CAM methods
- Need to move from a disease focussed treatment-oriented framework of public health and a system of medical prevention that encourages passive citizens - to one where time, money and effort are invested in citizens being actively engaged in living longer healthier lives - i.e. prevention-focused society in which healthy lifestyles and holistic approaches to care are promoted and sustained.

A full version of this document is available from EUROCAM.

EUROCAM

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