Complementary/alternative medicine in adolescents with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and mood disorders

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Abstract

The Complementary/Alternative Medicine (CAM) have been increasingly used by patients such as children and adolescents. The Ministry of Health in Chile (MINSAL) has recognized and regulated some CAM, although there is still unknown their effectiveness and safety of these.

OBJECTIVE:
Review the available evidence regarding the use of CAM in adolescents with the attention deficit hyperactivity syndrome (ADHD) and mood disorders.

METHODOLOGY:
A review of the related literature about this topic on PubMed, focus on the last 10 years and using as a keywords Complementary/Alternative Medicine/Therapies, Attention deficit disorder with hyperactivity, Mood disorders, and Children/Adolescents. The revision was also complemented with other sources of information.

RESULTS:
Globally there has been a progressive increase in publications in relation to the CAM. However, not all studies follow a good methodology and the majority of the studies in adolescents show inconclusive results. The ADHD studies have shown benefits when using omega 3 fatty acids. Regarding other CAM and ADHD, the evidence does not show any favorable results beyond placebo. Though some of these studies have methodological mistakes or lack of enough studies, making it impossible to have conclusive. In mood disorders, there are several promising therapies, such as: physical exercise, light therapy, St. John’s Wort and some kinds of meditation like Mindfulness. In Chile, there are still no studies in this age group, which makes important the development of a line of research in this area.