

Alternative medicine

Alternative medicine is, by definition, an alternative to something else: modern, Western medicine. But the term 'alternative' can be misleading, even off-putting for some people.

Few practitioners of homeopathy, acupuncture, herbalism and the like regard their therapies as complete substitutes for modern medicine. Rather, they consider their disciplines as supplementary to orthodox medicine.

The problem is that many doctors refuse even to recognize 'natural' or alternative medicine, to do so calls for a radically different view of health, illness and cure. But whatever doctors may think, the demand for alternative forms of medical therapy is stronger than ever before, as the limitations of modern medical science become more widely understood.

Alternative therapies are often dismissed by orthodox medicine because they are sometimes administered by people with no formal medical training. But, in comparison with many traditional therapies, western medicine as we know it today is a very recent phenomenon. Until only 150 years ago, herbal medicine and simple inorganic compounds were the most effective treatments available.

Despite the medical establishment's intolerant attitude, alternative therapies are being accepted by more and more doctors, and the World Health Organization has agreed to promote the integration of proven, valuable, 'alternative' knowledge and skills in western medicine.

1. Answer the following questions using your own words. (2 points: 1 point each)

- a) Why is the term 'alternative' not entirely appropriate when applied to medicine?
- b) Why are alternative therapies often rejected by conventional doctors?

2. Are the following statements true (T) or false (F)? (1 point: 0.5 each)

- a) Nowadays, more and more people are asking for alternative medicine.
- b) Herbal medicine has been the most effective treatment available for 50 years.

3. Find a word or phrase in the text which, in context, is similar in meaning to: (1 point: 0.5 each)

- a) Deceptive
- b) a group of people who have power and influence

4. Choose a, b, or c, in each question below. Only one choice is (2 points: 0.5 each)

1. Few practitioners of alternative medicine

- a) *consider their therapies to be complete replacements for modern medicine.*
- b) *reject the term 'alternative'.*

c) refuse to recognize alternative medicine.

2. Alternative therapies

a) are well regarded by the medical establishment.

b) are integrated into western medicine nowadays.

c) are becoming more popular with many doctors.

3. Western medicine

a) has existed for a comparatively short time.

b) is based on many traditional therapies.

c) is practised by people with no formal medical training.

4. The World Health Organization

a) has an intolerant attitude towards alternative therapies.

b) agrees with all alternative medicine.

e) will support effective traditional knowledge and skills.

5. Composition (100-150 words approximately). Choose of the following topics. (4 points)

1. How to live to the 100.

2. A friend has asked you about natural remedies. Recommend that he or she use them.