

كلية طب وايل كورنيل في قطر Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar

Member of Qatar Foundation

Press Release

WCMC study: high use of complementary medicines among women

Doha – December 6, 2014: Complementary and alternative medicines are used by almost 40 percent of middle-aged Arabic women living in Qatar, according to a study conducted by Weill Cornell Medical College researchers in Doha and New York.

A survey of 841 women aged 40 to 60 of Qatari and other Arabic nationalities found that in the past 12 months 38.2 percent had used a “Complementary or Alternative Medicine”(CAM) such as a special diet, herbal remedies, physical treatments like acupuncture and massage, homeopathy, traditional Chinese medicine, meditation or folk medicine.

The research, which is the first comprehensive study of complementary and alternative medicine use to be conducted in Qatar, has been published in the World Health Organization’s high profile *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal*.

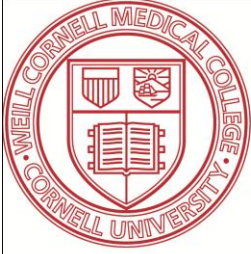
Entitled *Use of complementary and alternative medicine among midlife Arabic women living in Qatar*, the paper was authored by Dr. Linda M. Gerber, Professor of Healthcare Policy and Research at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York (WCMC-NY), along with Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar (WCMC-Q) faculty Dr. Ravinder Mamtani, Associate Dean for Global and Public Health; Dr. Sohaila Cheema, Director of Global and Public Health; and Dr. Mohamud Verjee, Associate Professor of Family Medicine.

Dr. Gerber said: “We felt that there had been little previous research conducted about the health-related behaviors and practices of midlife women in Qatar. Our results may inform patients and healthcare providers about the fairly widespread use of CAM in Qatar. The finding that 38 percent of our sample of women between the ages of 40 and 60 had used CAM in the previous 12 months merits more attention since the safety and efficacy of CAM may be of concern. Often patients do not tell their doctors about the about their use of CAM and doctors also often do not ask specifically about non-medicinal or non-conventional therapies.

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"We believe it is important to educate and inform patients and providers about the benefits and limitations associated with CAM."

The participants in the survey were women who had sought healthcare at primary health centers across Qatar. They hailed from many countries across the Arab World, including Qatar, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Sudan, Lebanon and Syria.

Ms. Ya-Lin. Chiu, formerly of WCMC-NY, Dr. Abdulbari Bener of Hamad Medical Corporation and Dr. Madhuvanti Murphy of The University of the West Indies in Barbados also contributed to the study.

Dr. Mamtani explained that complementary and alternative medicines are in many cases beneficial to the health of patients, but that some have little or no effect and others can be harmful, particularly if they interfere with conventional medications prescribed by a qualified physician.

He said: "It is interesting to see that so many women are seeking out non-conventional medicines.

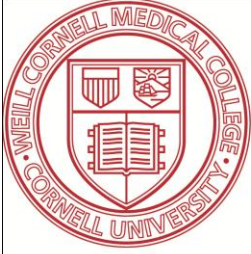
"However, it is very important for people to discuss whatever complementary medicines they are taking with their doctors to make sure they are not harmful and that they will not produce any dangerous side-effects when taken in combination with their prescribed therapies. The survey has contributed to an exciting movement towards integrative medicine, in which doctors should work with their patients to coordinate conventional treatments with beneficial complementary medicines to deliver the best possible healthcare outcomes."

Dr. Sohaila Cheema said: "The findings reveal that complementary medicines are widely used, so it is clearly important that both patients and physicians are aware of the impact of these treatments and that they are able to communicate effectively with one another to coordinate the most effective evidence-based care package. As such, we are looking at some very exciting and promising programs that can be developed to educate both patients and physicians about integrative medicine and the opportunities it offers for improved healthcare."

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The paper is part of a series of studies about the health of women of midlife age in Qatar being conducted by Cornell researchers at WCMC-Q and WCMC-NY with the support of Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF) under the National Priorities Research Program [NPRP 08 - 467 - 3 - 098].

Dr. Mohamud Verjee said: "This paper has contributed extremely valuable new knowledge to our understanding of women's healthcare in Qatar and it is extremely gratifying to see the study published so prominently."

Dr. Khaled Machaca, Associate Dean for Research at WCMC-Q, added: "This study will help local physicians and medical institutions better understand the health care needs of midlife women in Qatar and cater their services accordingly. Such studies support WCMC-Q's vision and ongoing commitment to produce research that benefits the local and regional communities."

About Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar

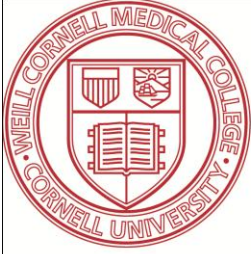
Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar is a partnership between Cornell University and Qatar Foundation. It offers pre-medical and medical courses leading to the Cornell University M.D. degree with teaching by Cornell and Weill Cornell faculty and by physicians at Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) and Aspetar Orthopedic and Sports Medicine Hospital who hold Weill Cornell appointments.

Through its biomedical research program, WCMC-Q is building a sustainable research community in Qatar while advancing basic science and clinical research. Through its medical college, WCMC-Q seeks to provide the finest education possible for medical students, to improve health care both now and for future generations, and to provide high quality health care to the Qatari population.

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