Use of complementary and alternative medicine for eye-related diseases and conditions.

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Abstract
AIM: To determine the prevalence, types and characteristics associated with complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) use to treat eye-related diseases and conditions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS: The 2002 and 2007 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) was used to identify participants, 18 years of age and older, who completed the Adult Alternative Health/Complementary and Alternative Medicine questionnaire. Characteristics for those who reported CAM use for eye diseases and conditions and those who did not were compared; the types of CAM and the eye diseases and conditions for their use were also reported.

RESULTS: In 2002, an estimated 0.1% of US adults reported using at least one of eight CAM therapies for eye-related problems; in 2007 the prevalence of CAM use for eye diseases and conditions had increased to 0.3%. In both 2002 and 2007, those who reported CAM use for eye diseases and conditions were more likely to be older, female, white and married. In both 2002 and 2007, the most common types of CAM therapies used were natural herbs and vitamin supplements. Macular degeneration was the most common condition for which CAM therapies were used.

CONCLUSIONS: The study suggests that there is a small and perhaps increasing proportion of the US population that uses CAM for eye diseases and conditions. Further research is needed to determine the use and effectiveness of CAM for
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ophthalmologic purposes.