

Editorial

Welcome to Topics in Integrative Health Care: an International Journal

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This is the inaugural issue of *Topics in Integrative Health Care (TIHC)*, a peer-reviewed, open-access quarterly online journal dedicated to advancing the integration of complementary and mainstream approaches to health into diverse settings. We expect our readers to be health care providers who are open to any effective methods to help patients regain and optimize their health, and lead more fulfilling and productive lives. We believe that those methods may be found in all health professions, and in all sorts of settings. TIHC takes an evidence-informed approach, and we intend to stay grounded in its three “legs”: patient values and preferences; clinician experience and expertise; and the best available scientific evidence.

Our intent is not to focus on any particular procedure or treatment, but to look at settings for integration (such as hospitals, nursing homes, free clinics, etc), populations receiving integrated care (such as older adults, underserved populations or athletes), and/or conditions and risk factors which benefit from integrated/multidisciplinary approaches (such as arthritis, hypertension, or physical inactivity).

The definition of *integrative health care* is still evolving. As discussed in the commentary by Daniel Redwood, DC, the United States government has in 2010 endorsed integrative health care as a key element in improving the nation’s health care system. It does not, however, define exactly what integrative health care or integrative health care practitioners are.

Thus we felt it was appropriate for the first issue of TIHC to provide readers with food for thought: examples of integrative health care in various settings. These range from a survey of the types of disciplines represented in the integrative health care centers associated with Academic Medical Centers, to a description of the integration of chiropractic services into a

multidisciplinary free clinic, to a needs assessment of the utility of integrating health promotion, especially tobacco cessation, services into a faith-based substance abuse center. We also present a Grand Rounds with a multidisciplinary approach to smoking cessation. Tobacco use, one of the world's most preventable causes of disease and death, is one of the clearest examples of a public health problem that requires an integrative approach in every sense of the word: integration of all phases of prevention; integration of public and individual health care; integration of policy, practice and individual behavioral habits; and integration of all types of health care approaches to help people quit tobacco, and to treat the illnesses that tobacco use causes.

Each issue of TIHC will focus on a particular theme. Although many of the articles will be invited, we also welcome unsolicited manuscripts. All submissions are peer-reviewed. The following themes are tentatively scheduled for the first volume (2010-2011):

- Winter 2010: Improving the Health of Older Adults
- Spring 2011: Physical Activity and Sports/Leisure
- Summer 2011: Approaches to Body-Mind Health and Healing

All issues of TIHC will emphasize not only the integration of various approaches and settings for the treatment of conditions, but also the integration of health promotion and prevention into all clinical encounters, as well as into both patients' and providers' daily lives. As so well-stated in Dr. Redwood's commentary,

"No systemic solution to the current health care crisis is possible unless large numbers of people choose to live in far more healthy ways. As integrative practitioners, we need to model the practices we recommend to others."

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