Association of complementary and alternative medicines with HIV clinical disease among a cohort of women living with HIV/AIDS.

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Association of complementary and alternative medicines with HIV clinical disease among a cohort of women living with HIV/AIDS.

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Authors
Mikhail, IS, DiClemente, R, Person, S, Davies, SL, Elliott, E, Wingood, G, Jolly, P

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Abstract
To assess the association between the use of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) and HIV clinical disease indicators, CD4+ T-cell counts, viral load, number of HIV-related infections, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention categories, and Karnofsky scores. Data were collected from 391 HIV-positive women aged 18 to 50 years in Alabama and Georgia. A survey examining CAM use and other sociodemographic variables was used. Multiple logistic regression analyses were used to identify predictors of CAM use. Approximately 60% of study participants used 1 or more type of CAM. Predictors of CAM use included higher educational level (odds ratio [OR] = 2.4; P = 0.0008), absence of health insurance (OR = 0.49; P = 0.0055), longer disease duration (OR = 2.21; P = 0.0006), and higher number of infections (OR = 0.58; P = 0.017). Vitamins were the most commonly used CAM (approximately 36%). Sociodemographic variables associated with vitamin use included higher educational level (OR = 2.34; P = 0.0055), longer disease duration (OR = 1.87; P = 0.026), and higher use among white women than among African-American women (OR = 0.41; P = 0.017). The use of CAM is prevalent among HIV-positive women, and vitamins are the most commonly used CAM among our study population. Several sociodemographic and clinical factors predicted CAM use. These findings have implications for improvement of care for HIV-
positive women.

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