

Focus on: NCCAM Specialty Research Centers in Oregon

In its mission to expand outreach, NCCAM strives to maintain an effective dialogue with its stakeholders about complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) practices. Toward this end, NCCAM has co-sponsored two regional Town Meetings to share information regarding CAM research efforts and findings and to provide an opportunity for public input.

On March 19, 2002, NCCAM will hold its third Town Meeting, in Portland, Oregon. This event is being co-sponsored by two NCCAM-supported research centers in Portland: the Oregon Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine in Neurological Disorders (ORCCAMIND) at Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) and the Craniofacial CAM Center of the Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Research.

Said Stephen E. Straus, M.D., Director of NCCAM, "I am looking forward to this event, which should provide us with invaluable insights into the CAM issues that concern residents of the Pacific Northwest." He added, "It should also offer attendees an opportunity to better understand the research that NCCAM supports to determine whether many CAM practices are safe and effective."

ORCCAMIND, the center at OHSU, is studying the efficacy of CAM therapies in treating neurological disorders in older individuals, especially Alzheimer's disease and multiple sclerosis. ORCCAMIND is currently funding studies on antioxidants, lactoferrin (a milk protein), traditional Chinese medicine, oral creatine monohydrate (a dietary supplement), and yoga as therapies for cognitive degenerative disorders. Two additional studies are evaluating ginkgo biloba as a treatment for Alzheimer's.

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OIHR Shares Expertise in Asia

On November 13 and 14, 2001, NCCAM sponsored a dynamic, information-packed meeting halfway around the world, in Singapore. "The U.S. National Institutes of Health NCCAM Workshop on Clinical Research Methodology and Grantsmanship" was held in association with "The Singapore Traditional Chinese Medicine Symposium 2001" and co-sponsored by NCCAM, The Johns Hopkins University, Johns Hopkins Singapore, and the National University of Singapore. It was the first outreach event of NCCAM's new Office of International Health Research (OIHR) and the first time a workshop on this topic had been held in Southeast Asia.

Speakers who traveled from the United States included Joana Rosario, M.D., M.P.H., OIHR Director; Anthony Coelho, Ph.D., Office of the NIH Director; Brian Berman, M.D., the University of Maryland Complementary Medicine Program; Adrian Dobs, M.D., The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine; Paul Lietman, M.D., The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and Johns

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Pictured above: The herb Spatholobus Suberectus Dunn

Dr. Nahin Accepts New Appointment

Richard L. Nahin, Ph.D., M.P.H., has been appointed Senior Advisor for Scientific Coordination and Outreach, a new position within the Office of the NCCAM Director. Previously, Dr. Nahin served as Director of NCCAM's Division of Extramural Research and Training (DERT). He also directed NCCAM's scientific review activities prior to the formation of the Office of Scientific Review (OSR). A formal search has been initiated for a senior scientist to serve as the new Director of DERT.

Research Funding Opportunities

Visit nccam.nih.gov/fi/concepts/funding.html on the Web for more information on these and other NCCAM funding opportunities.

- ▶ Program Announcement (PA-02-043): Social and Cultural Dimensions of Health. Sponsors: NCCAM and 15 other components of NIH.
- ▶ Request for Application (DK-02-026): Alternative Therapies for Benign Prostate Symptoms—Clinical Trial Consortium. Sponsors: NCCAM, the National Institute for Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, and the Office of Dietary Supplements.

- ▶ Program Announcement (PAR-02-040): Developmental/Pilot Projects in Cancer Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM). Sponsors: NCCAM and the National Cancer Institute (NCI).
- ▶ Program Announcement (PAR-00-027): CAM Education Project Grant. Sponsors: NCCAM and NCI.
- ▶ Program Announcement (PA-02-034): Pathophysiology and Treatment of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. Sponsors: NCCAM and 10 other components of NIH.

New Book Offers Insights on the Placebo Effect

The Science of the Placebo: Toward an Interdisciplinary Research Agenda, scheduled to be published in March 2002, is a comprehensive review of the state of placebo science and the ethical use of placebos in clinical trials. The volume comprises the full proceedings of a conference held at NIH in November 2000 and organized by NCCAM, the National Institute for Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, and additional components of NIH and the Department of Health and Human Services.

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OIHR Shares Expertise in Asia, *continued from pg. 1*

Hopkins Singapore; and Alice Chi, National Center for Research Resources at NIH.

Dr. Rosario led off the meeting by introducing NIH, NCCAM, and programs of special interest to international researchers. Other sessions addressed NIH scientific review processes and grants administration procedures; phase I, II, and III clinical trials; challenges and issues in CAM research; ethics; intellectual property issues; and other topics.

Two hundred people attended, including investigators, practitioners, government health officials, members of industry, and students, from approximately one dozen countries. Many commented on their desire to become viable candidates for NIH and NCCAM grants, and on the helpfulness of the sessions in figuring out what one called "the black box of NIH."

There was frequent discussion of the unique aspects of traditional Chinese medicine and the challenges they pose for fitting into a Western clinical research model. However, ways were proposed to meet this goal—for example, by developing language and tools of measurement common to both.

In convening the event, Dr. Rosario stated, "We at NCCAM hope that this workshop will foster stronger international collaborations in CAM research to more rapidly advance our scientific knowledge in this field." Stephen E. Straus, M.D., NCCAM Director, commented, "By bringing information about our global research program directly to investigators abroad, we hope that investigators from countries steeped in rich healing traditions can merge that expertise with the best contemporary research methods. This, we hope, will lead to compelling and competitive applications and, ultimately, studies of aspects of CAM that otherwise would be harder to undertake in the United States."

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Barry S. Oken, M.D., a professor of neurology at OHSU and principal investigator at the center, stated, "The general area of CAM research is important, because there are potentially useful therapies that are not being used widely as therapies for cognitive degenerative disorders Our center's research on oxidative injury and natural antioxidants stems from the fact that the brain is particularly sensitive to oxidative injury and from a belief that some CAM therapies act as antioxidants."

The Craniofacial CAM Center at Kaiser studies CAM approaches to diagnosing and managing craniofacial disorders—conditions affecting the skull, mouth, jaw, or face. Led by Principal Investigator B. Alexander White, D.D.S., an expert in oral health research, the team is researching the efficacy of CAM treatments for two craniofacial disorders: temporomandibular disorder (TMD), a group of painful conditions that involve the joint connecting the lower jaw to the rest of the skull, and chronic adult periodontitis, a severe gum disease. In clinical studies, CAM therapies including acupuncture and massage are being evaluated as pain management alternatives for sufferers of TMD. Researchers are also investigating naturopathic therapies as a treatment for chronic periodontitis. Beyond investigating whether these therapies work, the center is also researching how they may work through underlying physiological and psychological mechanisms.

The NCCAM Town Meeting in Portland is free and open to the public. For more information, see Calendar of Events. To learn more about NCCAM's Specialty Centers of Research, visit nccam.nih.gov/fi/research/centers.html.

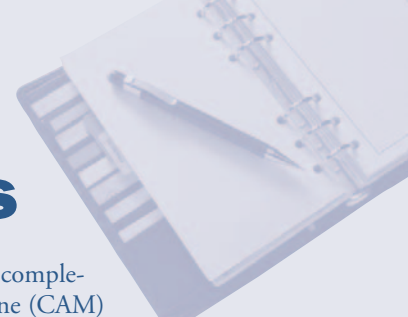
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The Science of the Placebo is being published by BMJ Books. To find out more, view the table of contents at placebo.nih.gov/follow-up/pub_contents.html or a general description on the BMJ Web site at www.bmj.com. (Click on "Bookshop" and then use "speed search.")

PC SPES and SPES Products Recalled

On February 8, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) warned consumers to stop taking the dietary supplement/herbal products PC SPES and SPES, because they contain undeclared prescription drug ingredients that could cause serious health effects if not taken under medical supervision. **Safety is a concern:** FDA and the manufacturer advise consumers to discontinue use immediately. FDA's information is at www.fda.gov. NCCAM is supporting four research studies of PC SPES. The one clinical study is on hold, pending further quality control reviews.

Calendar of Events



This calendar lists meetings on complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) that are sponsored or organized by NCCAM or other components of NIH. Agendas for NCCAM events are posted at nccam.nih.gov. The information line for NCCAM meetings is 301-594-9632.

MARCH 2002

Dr. Straus to Lecture at NIH: March 11, 2002—Stephen E. Straus, M.D., Director of NCCAM, will give the NIH Director's Lecture, "Exploring the Scientific Basis of Complementary and Alternative Medicine." Time and location: 3:00 p.m. ET; Masur Auditorium, NIH Clinical Center, Bethesda, Maryland.

Town Meeting on Complementary and Alternative Medicine: March 19, 2002—(See related article on page 1.) Time and location: 2:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m. PT; Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, Portland, Oregon. For more information, visit nccam.nih.gov or call the NCCAM Clearinghouse at 1-888-644-6226.

APRIL 2002

International Scientific Conference on Complementary, Alternative, and Integrative Medical Research: April 12–14, 2002—Location: Boston, Massachusetts. For more information, visit www.compmed.caregroup.org/sci-conf or call 617-384-8600.

MAY 2002

Meeting of the National Advisory Council for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NACCAM): May 28, 2002—Location: Neuroscience Center Building, 6001 Executive Boulevard, Rockville, Maryland. To find out more about the Council, visit nccam.nih.gov and select "About the NCCAM."

JULY 2002

NCCAM Distinguished Lectures in Complementary and Alternative Medicine: July 25, 2002—Charles Rosenberg, Ph.D., Professor of the History of Science and of Social Sciences, Harvard University. Time and location: 12:00 p.m. ET; Lipsett Auditorium, NIH, Bethesda, Maryland.

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Our mission: The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) is dedicated to exploring complementary and alternative healing practices in the context of rigorous science, training CAM researchers, and disseminating authoritative information to the public and professionals.

NCCAM's Clearinghouse: For information about the NCCAM or any aspect of CAM, contact the NCCAM Clearinghouse (see p. 4).

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FROM THE CLEARINGHOUSE

Are you wondering about the available scientific information on complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) therapies? Do you have questions about NCCAM? The NCCAM Clearinghouse can help with answers to these and many other questions.

When NCCAM was established by congressional mandate in October 1998, one of its expressed purposes was “the dissemination of health information...with respect to identifying, investigating, and validating complementary and alternative treatment, diagnostic, and prevention modalities, disciplines, and systems.” (Public Law 105–277) The NCCAM Clearinghouse fulfills this mission and also serves as the point of contact for public information about NCCAM. Clearinghouse staff carry out this charge in numerous ways—including responding to public inquiries, assisting in the creation of many of NCCAM’s publications, distributing materials, and maintaining the Alternative Medicine (AM) Subfile of the Combined Health Information Database, a Federal database (www.chid.gov).

You can contact the NCCAM Clearinghouse for scientifically based information on CAM and to find out more about NCCAM’s programs, research activities, events, and

publications. Information specialists staff a toll-free telephone line Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m. ET and can respond in English or Spanish. Certain publications can also be delivered to your fax machine if you request Fax on Demand, available 24 hours a day.

How to contact the NCCAM Clearinghouse:

Toll-free: 1–888–644–6226

International: 301–519–3153

TTY (for deaf or hard-of-hearing callers): 1–866–464–3615

Fax: 1–866–464–3616

E-mail: info@nccam.nih.gov

Address: NCCAM Clearinghouse

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Gaithersburg, MD 20898–7923

NCCAM Online

NCCAM Web site: nccam.nih.gov

NCCAM Fax-on-Demand Service

Toll-free: 1–888–644–6226

Please note that NCCAM does not provide medical advice or referrals to individual practitioners.

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