

Exploring the Experience and Insights of Chinese Registered Nurses on Alternative Medicine

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the perceptions and experiences of Chinese registered nurses regarding the clinical use of alternative medicine. The research focuses on nurses from various departments and roles, including specialist nurses, clinical nurses, and nursing management personnel. Through interviews, participants share their experiences, challenges, and views on alternative medicine in their daily work. The data collected will be analyzed using the Collaizi method. The study identifies four main themes: the development of alternative medicine in China, the challenges faced by nurses, how they overcome these challenges, and their predictions for the future of alternative medicine in the country. Key findings highlight the emotional impact of work changes, the difficulties encountered in the nursing profession, and nurses' resilience. Lastly, participants offer insights into the future of alternative medical practices in China.

KEYWORDS

Chinese registered nurse; Traditional Chinese Medicine; Alternative Medicine; Complementary and Alternative medicine

1. INTRODUCTION

The theory of alternative medicine originated in Western countries and gradually spread to Eastern countries in the late twentieth century. The United States defines alternative medicine as medical treatment other than Western medicine, and in the United Kingdom refers to treatment methods that play a complementary role to Western medicine. Alternative medicine includes traditional medicine and folk remedies, which are mostly empirical and mainly serve to protect health. Many of these therapies are widely used in clinical practice, mainly to provide a better treatment experience for patients. A recent study shows that acupuncture accounts for the second 23% of alternative medicine therapies, while herbal therapies account for 12%, ranking 5th.

With a large population and relatively high demand for medical care in China, alternative therapies are widely used in clinical settings as a supplement to conventional treatments, which requires the cooperation of clinical nursing staff. This paper focuses on the perceptions and application experiences of Chinese registered nurses regarding alternative medicine based on Chinese registered nurses. The application of alternative medicine by Chinese registered nurses is mainly focused on Chinese medicine and rehabilitation. In China, there are general hospitals and specialized Chinese medicine hospitals, which are mainly Chinese medicine departments, and Chinese medicine diagnosis and herbal treatment are the main features of Chinese medicine hospitals. Since the study was conducted based on Chinese nurses, the questions of whether alternative therapies are necessary for clinical treatment of patients, which departments use alternative therapies, and how effective alternative therapies are are worthy of further study.

The international community's view of alternative medicine is that alternative medicine and fringe medicine, not derived from medical practices collected by scientific methods, alternative medicine is not part of biomedicine, and they believe that some treatments of alternative medicine including health care methods, health products, etc. may seem reasonable from a biological point of view, but many methods are unproven, not fully tested and scientifically validated, and There may be certain contradictions, and they may even be toxic or harmful to humans. The cost of testing how alternative therapies actually work is quite large, and the U.S. government once spent \$2.5 billion on testing alternative medicine, but did not gather some useful scientific information. Due to the lack of scientific validation, many medical experts are critical of alternative medicine, which they consider to be a treatment method that wastes scarce medical resources, backed by scientific theories of the dollar.

For the application of alternative therapies, the use of alternative medicine in some international countries is mostly inclined to be a supplement to modern medicine. When conventional treatments such as surgery and western medicine cannot continue to work for patients' diseases, some patients tend to choose alternative therapies for follow-up treatment, such as patients with advanced cancer, choosing alternative therapies, although they cannot save life but can alleviate patients' symptoms and reduce patients' pain. However, due to the lack of scientific experimental data, many alternative therapies for patients with difficult diseases are still in the experimental stage, using different alternative therapies for patients with different diseases and requiring different analyses for different cases.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

As of May 2021, the number of registered nurses in China exceeded 4.7 million, and the percentage of specialist education exceeded 70%, which is higher than the overall education of nurses in 2015, the quality of education and professional service capacity of the nursing team has been improving, the quality of nursing services has continued to improve, and the professionalism of specialist nurses has been rising. The number of registered nurses in departments such as Chinese medicine and rehabilitation, which have a high application of alternative therapies, has also been increasing. At the end of November 2021, the number of healthcare institutions in China was 1,044,000. from January to November 2021, the total number of visits to healthcare institutions in China was 6.05 billion, an increase of 22.4% year-on-year. Due to the increase in healthcare facilities, which facilitates access and enhances people's well-being, the impact of different treatments on patients' quality of life after healing varies. Medical misdiagnosis causes 44,000-98,000 deaths per year in the United States, more than car accidents, lung cancer, and AIDS, and causes an economic loss of \$17-29 billion per year. This shows that alternative medicine focuses on the human's own resistance and immunity to disease, reducing the possibility of treatment leading to the patient's body being harmed.

With the continuous development of Chinese medicine, the number of medical schools in China is increasing, the number of hospitals is also increasing, and medical research is actively cooperating and exchanging with other countries around the world. Various therapies are applied to patients with related diseases after clinical trials based on theoretical research. Western medicine has been introduced to China for less than two hundred years, and alternative medicine has not been introduced to China for long, and there are various types of medical institutions in China, such as general hospitals, Chinese medicine hospitals, combined Chinese and Western medicine hospitals, specialty hospitals, rehabilitation hospitals, etc. The use of alternative therapies may also vary from one general hospital to another. While TCM hospitals basically use traditional Chinese medicine treatments, such as herbal therapy, acupuncture, massage and gua sha, which are mostly alternative therapies.

This research is mainly based on Chinese hospitals, through interviews with Chinese registered nurses, to study the views and experiences of Chinese registered nurses on the development of alternative

medicine, so traditional Chinese medicine has become the main research direction of Chinese alternative medicine.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

This qualitative investigation investigated the use and perceptions of Chinese registered nurses on alternative therapies through questionnaires. Thus, it also explored differences between alternative medicine and conventional medicine, and the advantages and disadvantages of its use in clinical practice. The purpose of this study was to answer the broad question of "Chinese registered nurses' perceptions of alternative medicine and some of their experiences in daily practice". The results of these surveys were based on the respondents' perceptions and clinical practice experiences of alternative medicine. Thus, the researcher aimed to investigate their feelings and thoughts when they are in a stressful situation and be able to recognize their coping strategies in dealing with stress.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Research Aim and Methodology

The aim of this research is to identify characteristics, frequencies, trends, and categories in relation to Chinese registered nurses' experiences with alternative medicine. This approach is useful when little is known about the topic. Before understanding why something happens, it is essential to first understand how, when, and where it happens (McCombes, 2019). Phenomenology, specifically qualitative descriptive phenomenology, is used to explore and understand the structures of consciousness as experienced from a first-person perspective. This method is particularly useful in this study to investigate the intentionality of experiences, focusing on how nurses perceive and direct their consciousness toward alternative medicine (Smith, David Woodruff, 2018; Salvador et al., 2016). The study seeks to explore the perspectives of Chinese registered nurses toward alternative medicine by understanding their lived experiences.

4.2. Participants, Sampling, and Data Collection

A total of 10 registered nurses from government-owned tertiary care hospitals in China participated in this study. The participants were chosen based on specific inclusion criteria: they must be registered nurses employed by the National Health Council of the People's Republic of China, assigned to an alternative medicine-related department, willing to share their experiences, and voluntarily participate without any financial gain. Simple random sampling was used to ensure that each participant had an equal chance of being selected. The study was conducted in a government hospital in Anhui Province, China, which has a Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) department, among other health services. To collect data, semi-structured interviews were conducted, lasting 25-30 minutes, during which participants shared their personal and professional experiences, particularly regarding their perceptions of alternative medicine. Demographic data were also collected to identify the characteristics of the study population.

5. RESULTS

5.1. Current Status of Development of Alternative Medicine in China

The current status of alternative medicine in China presents various challenges for nurses, influencing both their work and personal lives. Nurses report that changes in work content and methods, along with daily challenges, often lead to stress and fatigue. These challenges affect their mood and overall well-being. Drawing on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, it is suggested that addressing the basic

physiological needs of nurses could improve their ability to provide better patient care by reducing stress and allowing them to focus on their essential needs. This topic mainly records some problems and opinions that nurses encounter in their work. This topic identified is: Participants will describe their daily work and life experiences, whether positive or negative, work content and Changes in the way they work will affect their daily lives.

5.2. Challenges in Nursing Work

The second theme highlights the challenges nurses face in their work, particularly during stressful situations like health emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants shared personal narratives describing the emotional and professional struggles they encounter, including the difficulties of managing patient care and working with colleagues. Nurses have varying perspectives on the role of alternative medicine in healthcare, with some seeing its gradual integration into everyday life as positive, while others remain neutral or cautious, noting similarities with traditional Chinese medicine and shared developmental challenges. Despite these differing views, participants emphasized the need for collective efforts across industries to support the advancement of alternative medicine and the nursing profession in China. The theme clusters include the current state of the industry, nursing resources, and responses to health emergencies. The interviewed participants described some of the difficulties and challenges they encountered in their work through narratives, which made them struggle in their hearts. This topic means that some of the difficulties and challenges that the participants encountered in their work obstacle. This topic has a clear implication of the challenges that nurses encounter in the workplace and the content of stress on nurses at work. This describes how participants' job content affected their self-concept. Thus, affecting their behavior at work.

5.3. How Nurses Overcome Various Difficulties

The third theme explores how nurses overcome difficulties in their profession, often adapting to challenging situations and finding ways to persevere. Participants shared that while they face various hardships, including inadequate staffing and increased workloads, they learn to accept these realities and continue to perform their duties. Many nurses reported that the shortage of nursing staff, especially in front-line positions, adds significant pressure, affecting both their work and personal lives, such as experiencing insomnia and stress. Additionally, health emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic have required nurses to quickly adapt to new responsibilities and workloads. Despite these challenges, nurses strive to improve their skills and maintain a sense of professional responsibility, demonstrating resilience and a commitment to patient care. The thematic clusters identified include mood changes, seeking cooperation, and professional responsibility. Through these, although various difficulties will come to nurses for different reasons, nurses can still continue to do their jobs well under difficult conditions. This will benefit them in developing their own work, mind-boosting their personal skills and, therefore, making them more competent and knowledgeable in their profession.

5.4. What's Next for China

The theme of "What's Next for China" highlights the personal insights of interviewed participants regarding the future development of alternative medicine in the country. Nurses expressed their perspectives on the evolving landscape of healthcare, emphasizing the importance of timely problem-solving in a relaxed environment to foster collaboration and address challenges. Participants shared their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, reflecting on the fear and uncertainty they faced while providing care to infected patients. Despite their fears, they felt a profound sense of professional responsibility, motivating them to confront the unknown and protect the lives of countless families. This theme encompasses the participants' predictions for the future of Chinese medicine and the

pathways for its development, along with the varying attitudes toward its integration into healthcare. The thematic clusters identified include pathways to development and attitudes. This theme presents the interviewed participants' personal views on the future development of Chinese medicine. In their descriptions, they mainly made a personal outlook on the next step of medical development in China and the development of alternative medicine.

6. DISCUSSION

After conducting this study, the researchers realized that although the development of complementary and alternative medicine in China is affected by many factors, the role of alternative medicine in the development of Chinese medicine is undeniable, and the future development path Still worth the wait. Because this study mainly investigates the development of alternative medicine in China, the research has a certain representativeness in China. The main goal of developing alternative medicine is to reduce the economic burden of patients and improve drug safety and satisfaction of patients. In order to make nurses aware of trends in alternative medicine and to improve their awareness, the researchers developed a training module on "Nurse Self-Care". This training module mainly helps nurses learn the relevant content of self-care, so as to help improve the happiness index of nurses.

7. SUMMARY

The researchers investigated Chinese registered nurses' perceptions and experiences of alternative medicine. Ten Chinese licensed nurses from a large government hospital in China were selected for participation. This selected group was chosen because they work in nursing care in China. In addition, these Chinese nurses come from different departments, and these nurses are equipped with advanced knowledge and skills, making it easier for them to adapt to the required critical thinking. In addition, the researchers did not limit the gender and age of the expected participants. Data collection was done over three months until data saturation.

This study was conducted only with nurses in major departments using alternative medicine in selected government hospitals. Nurses, managers and supervisors from other departments were not included in this study. The reason for excluding these groups was because the researchers wanted to investigate in depth the thoughts and experiences of nurses who are in direct contact with patient care. Also, due to time constraints, the researchers focused on only one topic, alternative medicine.

8. CONCLUSIONS

A study of Chinese registered nurses' perceptions and experiences of alternative medicine, aimed at promoting the development of Chinese medicine for the benefit of all populations, prioritizing patient satisfaction and safety experience. Therefore, it can promote the development of China's medical-related industries, and promote the country and related units to pay attention to the dedication and sacrifice of nursing practitioners. Since this study focuses on the needs of healthcare and the innovative development of the nursing industry, as registered nurses in China, they have the courage to explore and actively pursue better nursing skills. Modeled on the Roy adaptation model, four themes emerged from this study. They are as follows: 1) The development status of alternative medicine in China; 2) The challenges in nurses' work; 3) How nurses overcome various difficulties; 4) What is the next step in China. Combined with Sister Calista Roy's adaptation model, according to the interviews with nurses and the feedback they got, they sacrificed themselves, worked as a team, and bravely confronted all difficulties, so as to promote them to improve their coping ability. Therefore, self-concept, role functioning, and interdependence are interrelated, and they are the result of working together as a team in the face of all difficulties. Finally, although Chinese registered nurses have different views and views on the development of alternative medicine, and they have

experienced many challenges, they still adapt to all the difficulties they encounter and usher in a better and better development trend.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) Since this study shows Chinese registered nurses' views and experience of using alternative medicine, including nurses' views and views. Through this study, participants will understand the trends of future medical development, as well as the future direction of the nursing profession.

(2) The relevant data collected from this study can help patients, nurses' family members, doctors and other related personnel better understand the work content of nurses and understand some choices made by nurses.

(3) Through this study, practitioners in the medical industry, ordinary people, and more people can understand the development status of alternative medicine in China, and further promote the development of alternative medicine in China.

(4) Since this study conducts telephone interviews with nursing staff, it is possible to learn about the specific status quo of grassroots nurses, to promote patients' understanding of nurses' work content, and to reduce the occurrence of nurse-patient conflicts.

(5) Through this research, we can better understand the status quo of the nursing industry, take care of the needs of patients, and improve nursing satisfaction.

(6) The nursing industry involves not only clinical nursing work, but the importance of developing nursing scientific research is self-evident. Through this study, it is suggested that relevant departments attach importance to nursing scientific research investment, which will help improve patients' experience in medical treatment and comprehensively treat patients. aspects of diagnosis and treatment.

(7) From this research, we can understand the development status of relevant industries, check for gaps and fill in gaps, focus on the development of underdeveloped industries, and jointly develop multiple industries to promote the prosperity of the medical industry.

8.This study can serve as a reference for future researchers to do quantitative research related to this topic.

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