

Ursidae: The Undergraduate Research Journal at the University of Northern Colorado

Volume 5

Number 1 2015 *Research Excellence Awards Winners and Finalists*

Article 18

January 2015

Undergraduate Students' Experiences with Complementary and Alternative Medicine

Erin Sanchez

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digscholarship.unco.edu/urj>

 Part of the [Medicine and Health Sciences Commons](#), and the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Sanchez, Erin (2015) "Undergraduate Students' Experiences with Complementary and Alternative Medicine," *Ursidae: The Undergraduate Research Journal at the University of Northern Colorado*: Vol. 5 : No. 1 , Article 18.
Available at: <http://digscholarship.unco.edu/urj/vol5/iss1/18>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Scholarship & Creative Works @ Digital UNC. It has been accepted for inclusion in Ursidae: The Undergraduate Research Journal at the University of Northern Colorado by an authorized editor of Scholarship & Creative Works @ Digital UNC. For more information, please contact Jane.Monson@unco.edu.

Undergraduate Students' Experiences with Complementary and Alternative Medicine

Presenter: Erin Sanchez

Faculty Mentor: Susan Hutchinson

Abstract: Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) has been found to be highly effective in treating common ailments of undergraduates. However, students may not benefit from CAM if they attend at university where CAM is not widely available. Recent research at such an institution discovered that student CAM use was lower than the national average and that increasing their CAM knowledge may also increase their CAM use. The current study attempted to determine how students' experiences and views on CAM affected their decision to use or not use CAM. Interviews were conducted during the spring 2015 semester with 5 students who were recruited during a previous study. Two sets of questions were developed for both CAM users and non-users asking students about their experiences with CAM. A thematic analysis was completed using NVivo. CAM users had more positive attitudes toward CAM while CAM non-users felt more neutral about CAM. Family history of CAM use was prevalent with CAM users while skepticism and lack of experience was common with CAM non-users. All participants indicated they lack knowledge about CAM and this acts as barrier to their CAM use. Many participants also claimed that increasing their CAM knowledge would increase their CAM use. The implications of these results are twofold. First, CAM non-users have not used CAM because they have little exposure to CAM. Second, both CAM users and non-users lack CAM knowledge and increasing it would increase their CAM use. The student health center appeared to be a common place for participants to look for health information. To increase students' use of CAM, their exposure and knowledge about CAM should be increased, and the student health center may be utilized to do so. It is important to increase students' use of CAM because it can be beneficial to students' health and well-being.