

Alternative Medicine for the Elderly



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The explosion of information about complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) has demanded the attention of health professionals and responsible consumers, in cluding the elderly. Increasingly, medical schools are providing education about CAM. This book brings together for academicians and interested mainstream practitio ners much of the current information on CAM and its role in the health of the elderly. The individual chapters are thoroughly researched and quite readable, even for patients and the lay public concerned with the state of the evidence and art supporting CAM's role in prevention and management of illness and well-being. This book provides edu cators with much necessary information needed to prepare coursework and learning activities. Although definitive data are lacking regarding efficacy and even safety of CAM methodologies, many chapters in this book summarize the existing evidence in a us able way. The topics analyzed range from well-accepted therapies, such as vitamin E for dementia and zinc tablets for the common cold, to far less conventional therapies such as transcendental meditation. The conclusions are often surprising, but well-presented and defended. Even the most highly controversial areas, such as the use of acupuncture to treat low back pain and osteoarthritis of the knee, are thoroughly and fairly re viewed. Finally, the chapters address some of the political issues that challenge CAM. These issues include who should be allowed to practice a CAM discipline whose efficacy is not based on the scientific method, and some of the state-to-state variations in prac tice standards and licensure.

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