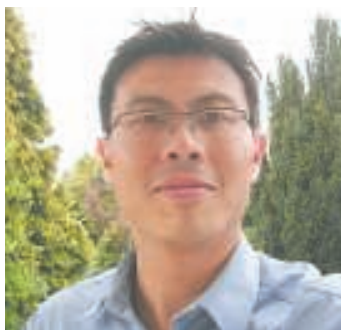


Using Conventional and Complementary Healthcare

One characteristic of conventional medical care is the use of a pathology-diagnosis-treatment model. Here, it's crucial that a definitive disease or condition be identified. For instance, this could be type II diabetes, a form of chronic leukaemia, a bleed in a certain part of the brain, or a specific infection — for instance, norovirus. To define the condition in even more detail, subtypes of the disease, its severity and stage of advancement are also used.



Dr Tat Loo: Chiropractor

This approach is extremely powerful: once you have identified the condition exactly, you can access all the medical knowledge associated with it. This is why so much money is put into diagnostic tests and imaging: so that the identification (diagnosis) can occur. But this approach struggles if someone's problems are difficult to define precisely, their symptoms are nonspecific, and their test results don't explain what is happening. Why? Because there can be no treatment with no diagnosis. The

process runs into a wall. One option is to keep going for more tests in the hope that something definitive will turn up, allowing treatment to begin.

Clearly defined conditions with clear causes can often be treated extremely well conventionally. Medical treatment may strike close to the root cause of the ill health and sort it. Surgical treatment of acute appendicitis is an example. Sometimes conventional treatments

do not deal with the root cause of ill health at all; this may be because the root causes are too complex — even if the condition itself is common. Migraines and low-back pain are examples. Treatments are often symptomatic or suppressive in focus. They push symptoms away so that they can be better ignored, but the underlying issues remain. One result can be the need for lifetime medication, as problems will simply flare at the first opportunity.

For some, conventional medical diagnosis and treatment are very helpful for dealing with aspects of their healthcare needs. However, gaps and grey areas exist which mean that other aspects of their healthcare needs are not successfully met. This may be one reason that complementary and alternative medical (CAM) treatments like chiropractic care have been shown by research to be commonly used by the New Zealand public today.

This content reflects personal opinions of Dr Tat Loo, a Dunedin-based chiropractor.

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