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Title

Attitudes, awareness and use of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) by runners

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Rationale

There is no information on the awareness, utilisation and attitudes to complementary medicine by runners. This is vital for the rational provision of CAM services for this subgroup.

Aims and Objectives

To review the type and frequency of running injuries and ascertain if runners perceive complementary medicine to be effective in the management of running injuries.

Design

Cross sectional survey using a questionnaire consisting of 30 closed response questions collecting demographic data and information on running habits, injuries, healthcare choices and perceptions of efficacy of treatment.

Subjects

100 non-elite runners participating in the 2007 Flora London Marathon.

Methods

A convenience sampling approach was adopted for runners entering a pre-determined area at the start of the race who were asked to complete a brief questionnaire.

Results

For the 100 runners surveyed, the one year prevalence for running-related injuries was 43%. The majority of injuries were to the knee and lower leg (48%). The treatment modalities used were physiotherapy (44%), sports injury therapist (16%), massage (12%), chiropractic (11%), acupuncture (9%), podiatrist (4%) and osteopath (3%). 42% of respondents had visited their GP for running-related injuries where medication was prescribed in 32% of these cases. Overall CAM use (Chiropractic, Osteopathy, Acupuncture, Homeopathy, Aromatherapy, Massage therapy) was 21% for both genders. Most regarded CAM as helpful and of reasonable cost. CAM and other mainstream therapies were used in conjunction with GP input by 37% of respondents and 55% continued to receive maintenance CAM care.

Conclusion

Runners were receptive to CAM and have a high utilisation level and positive health care attitudes.