

The view of the psychological and psychiatric establishment towards holistic (alternative) medicine treatments: Changes in the attitude and reflected in 1989-1999 publications/

Korin Shachar

Abstract

This study researches the change of psychiatry and psychology's attitude towards holistic (alternative) medicine between the years of 1989-1999, and the reasons that brought about this change. In order to reach results a bibliometric test, which took into account documents from the relevant period dealing with the psychological-psychiatric field, was conducted. Those documents were taken out of 22 scientific and professional databases, via DIALOG- the online vendor.

The primary assumption of the research was that an increase in the number of documents would show an increase in awareness and interest in this area by authors representing the psychiatric/psychological medical establishment.

Another assumption was that as the number of phrases and definitions describing methods and conceptions used by the holistic medicine, would grow, this would be an indication of a rising interest in those issues.

4061 documents were found searching "Alternative Medicine" within one-search category "PSYCH". Those documents contained terminology of holistic (alternative) medicine, out of them, 1511 also contained psychology and psychiatric terminology.

The documents were written on work-boards, and while being sorted according to their publication dates. Relevant terms were chosen as "key-words", classified as descriptors, titles or abstracts, and counted the number of times it appeared as each one.

A comparison was made between the documents found in database 11 (the only one that dealt solely with psychology/psychiatry-following "Database 11 Sample") and documents found in the other databases (that cover various areas-following "Remainder Databases"), so that the differences between a wholly psychiatric/psychological database and other databases, would be shown.

assumption about the increasing reference of the documents to the issue of holistic medicine and its treatments.

Each abstract of the 206 documents of "Database 11 Sample" was analyzed in order to determine the author's attitude to the subject matter of the document. The documents were graded according to an evaluation ladder ranging from numerical value 1 (extremely negative) to 7 (extremely positive). Some 32% of documents received an evaluation of values 6-7. About 56% of documents received evaluation of values 4-5 and approx. 12% of documents received evaluation of values 2-3. No documents receiving value 1 evaluations.

The analysis of 206 documents pointed out the great importance the authors refer to conducting further researches, regarding holistic medicine. This tendency is distinctly different from the non-recognition of this field, characterizing the literature representative of the psychological and psychiatric establishment in the years prior to the research period. 31% of the documents receiving 6-7 assesment point at a significant change in the attitude of the establishment's representatives to the issue of holistic medicine in general, and its method of treatment, in particular.

The reasons that increased the patients' demand of seeking holistic therapy as reflected in the documents were: seeking for a solution for problems that conventional medicine failed to provide, medicaments without by-side symptoms, co-operational patient-therapist relations, were patients receive more information than in the conventional medicine.

It seems that this process had affected the conventional medical establishment and has brought about some acts such: founding in 1992 the office dealing with alternative (holistic) medicine, by the American National Institutes of Health, allocating funds for researches concerning the efficiency and reliability of holistic therapy, and introducing various treatments used in holistic medicine into conventional medicine.

System No.

1090402