

# ABSTRACT

## HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS OF COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINE

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**Introduction:** The interest and use of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) is constantly expanding. Despite the increased prevalence of the use of CAM in the Czech Republic, no common approach to regulation or general legislation of KAM has been adopted so far. At present, there is a lack of view of this issue on the part of KAM therapists in the Czech Republic.

**Aim:** To determine the attitudes of CAM therapists to the regulation of CAM according to the criteria of evaluation of regulation, which are based on the requirements for health professionals. The secondary objective was to determine the influence of socio-demographic characteristics on the attitudes of CAM therapists.

**Methods:** The cross-sectional prospective observational study was carried out using an online anonymous questionnaire survey in the period from March 29, 2021 to April 18, 2021. The questionnaire was sent to registered associations of complementary medicine therapists in the Czech Republic, selected in the public register of subjects. Data were collected over a three-week period, during which respondents were able to participate in the survey voluntarily. The results were then analyzed using statistical software and standard descriptive statistics methods.

**Results:** Of the 19 therapists' associations contacted, 6 accepted an invitation to participate in the survey. Of the 238 therapists who received the questionnaire, 48 were completed. 89.6% of respondents were women and the average age of all therapists was 46 years. 57.4% of respondents were university graduates and 48.9% practiced in a city with more than 100,000 inhabitants. The most frequently mentioned criterion, according to which the conditions for the regulation of CAM should be adjusted, was the existence of a code of ethics for a professional organization (83.3%) and on the other hand, the least compliant criterion was legal responsibility for recommended CAM procedures (19%). A statistical dependence of the requirement for the existence of a code of ethics for organizations on the size of the therapists' residence ( $p$ -value = 0.040) or the conditions of uniform practice requirements for a given method on the age of therapists ( $p$ -value = 0.018) was found.

**Conclusion:** KAM therapists in the Czech Republic would agree to adopt certain criteria that are similar to the requirements for the medical professions. For some of the criteria,

a statistical dependence on sociodemographic characteristics was found. It would be beneficial to continue further research in this area.