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## A Study on Awareness of Patients Towards Different Systems of Medicine in Punjab

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### ABSTRACT

The patients are at times confused for choosing the system of medicine for attaining their preventive and curative health. Awareness regarding different system of medicine is a prerequisite for this. The system of medicine with high awareness level has high probability of getting preferred over others. It is vital to explore the patient's view regarding the awareness from particular form of medicine system e.g. Allopathy, AYUSH, Alternative medicine etc. Awareness regarding diverse medical systems among masses need to be analysed in the light of certain demographical variables (gender, area, level of education etc.). Due to different geographical regions it is important to explore the popularity of different systems of medicine in specific chosen regions. Thus, this study is aimed to examine the extent of medical awareness and popularity of different systems of healthcare among the people of Punjab. Data was collected using questionnaire administered through personal interview. A total of 200 respondents were interviewed. The responses obtained through questionnaire are analysed and presented as Pie charts and Bar charts etc. depending upon type of response.

**Keywords:** Awareness, System of medicine, Health, Patients, Allopathy, AYUSH, Alternative medicine.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Awareness is generally related to the factors like trust, reliability, high quality, closeness to people, a good quality/price ratio, accessibility and traditional styling. (Kapferer 2012).

Level of awareness among different systems of medicine can affect choices considerably. Many times, patients don't have the necessary knowledge or experience to judge benefits of different systems of medicine even if they desire so, to get their disease treated. Disease refers to the condition that hampers the normal functioning of human body. For this reason, diseases are associated with dys functioning of the

body's normal homeostatic processes. (Oswego City School District Regents Exam Prep Center. Retrieved 2012-11-12).

There is strong need of a study where patients tend to take decision regarding adopting a medical system as a choice of their treatment. Classification of different system of medicine for treatment of disease are:

**Allopathic Medicine:** The word "Allopathic medicine" refers to the broad category of medical practice, which is also known as Western medicine or evidence-based medicine or modern medicine. (Zhang X., 2001). When we talk about treatment of diseases, we often take into consideration this system of medicine, commonly called as Allopathic medicine.

However, there are a wide range of medical practices around the globe that does not considered as allopathic medicine but followed by people in consideration to be safe. Government of India vide Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Department of AYUSH governs few of them and are mentioned below.

**Ayurveda:** The Ayurveda is also known as science of life. It is based on the philosophy of five elements (Pancha Mahabhoot). It states that this universe, living bodies and objects are made up of these 5 elements. The aim of practices in Ayurveda is to maintain structural and functional equilibrium among these to attain good health. Ayurvedic practices includes various regimes, diet schedules, procedures, medicine and activity schedules to restore equilibrium.

**Unani:** Practice of Unani system of medicine in India started during medieval period. Although it originated in Greece and enriched by many countries, especially by Arabs. It emphasise on the practice of herbal medicines including naturally occurring animal and marine based products also. Unani system of medicine is focused on promotion of positive health and prevention of diseases.

**Homeopathy:** In Homeopathic system of medicine potency drugs are administered for curing diseases. Experimentally proven drugs are modified through specialized methods to cure systems of human beings.

**Yoga and Naturopathy:** More than the system of medicine Yoga is way of life. Other than physical health yoga practice brings improvement in mental, emotional, social and personal behaviour also. Yoga also helps achieving serenity of mind. Naturopathy is based on non-pharmacological treatment of diseases. It focusses on practices related to law of nature. Hydrotherapy, mud therapy, massage, fasting etc are main practices associated with naturopathy.

There are other systems of medicine known as alternative branch of medicine, is Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM). The scientific medical practitioners call this system of medicine as baseless or unscientific. At times term 'quack' is also associated with practitioners' for this system of medicine. But there are a large number of people who prefer these forms of medication to the conventional medical treatment. The alternative medicine practices are more known for being safe and act more at psychosomatic levels. Few of the most common alternate therapies are: Pscho-neurobics, Acupuncture, Chiropractic, Reiki etc.

Swapnil M (2016) says while there has been a wide acceptance of allopathic medicines due to significant progress in medicine research, also much has been done to deal with the side effects of such medicine. There are people who are allergic to certain allopathic treatments, such people have to try Ayurveda or homeopathy or other alternatives which have no side effects. Chatterjee B, Biswas P C, Pancholi J (2012). Sometimes people also resort to self-medication where they tend to take decisions on their own and choose drugs or medicines that they are compatible with based on their learning or past experiences. Sunil J, Gupta

A K, Singla R, Gupta V (2009). There are many reasons like lack of time, minor illnesses, unavailability of doctors, economic reasons, difficulty of accessibility (not easily available), and crowded hospitals due to which consumers rely on self-medication practices.

This research attempts to study awareness among people of Punjab regarding different system of medicine so as to know their knowledge in decision making regarding choosing the type of medical treatment for their disease.

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

- To study the concept of awareness among different systems of medicine.
- To measure awareness of patients towards different system of medicine from Punjab.

## **3. EXPERIMENTAL SECTION**

This study is based on a quantitative research to be made on patients referring different systems of medicine, through a questionnaire. The aim is to find out how well-known are different system of medicine among patients. The purpose is also to figure out which system of medicine people see as a potential remedy to their health issue. The study is focused to measure awareness among patients referring six different systems of medicine namely Modern medicine (Allopathic), Ayurveda, Homeopathic, Unani, Yoga & Naturopathy and Alternative Medicine (CAM). Reference for selection of systems of medicine was taken from medical practitioner's registration process in Punjab as well as easy availability of systems of medicine in the region of Punjab. Both exploratory and descriptive research design was used. Two-stage sampling technique was used for selection of sampling units. In first-stage, State of Punjab was divided into 3 historically divided geographical regions of Punjab i.e Doaba, Majja and Malwa. In second stage a sample from all systems of medicine quota sampling method was used. The healthcare establishments intercepts survey method was used for this. Also, surveys were conducted at the public places. Interviews were conducted at different healthcare timings i.e. morning, evening and night in order to survey different strata of the population. The sample size was 200 and calculated using statistical formula. Questionnaire was used as Research Instrument, and it was designed on the basis of literature findings. Balanced approach was adopted as respondents are given multiple-choice options, list questions and Likert-style rating question.

## **4. QUESTIONNAIRES AND OBSERVATIONS**

1. Did you ever hear about the mentioned different systems of medicine?
2. Among the mentioned systems of medicine, which you think is better?
3. Which system of medicine you prefer in case of emergency?
4. Which system of medicine you prefer in case of surgery?
5. Which system of medicine you prefer in case of chronic/lifestyle diseases?
6. Which system of medicine you prefer in case of common/acute ailments?
7. In which system of medicine, you found more side effects?
8. In your view which system of medicine, you feel convenient to use?

9. In which system of medicine, you think more money should be put into for promotion and research.
10. Do you have convenient access to different systems of medicine for treatment?

Following bar diagram (Figure 1) shows responses of people who heard about the different systems of medicine.

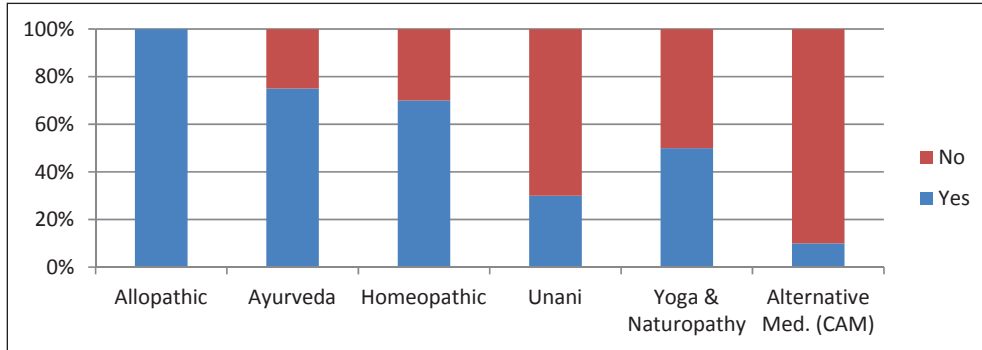


Figure 1

Response regarding better system of medicine. (Fig 2)

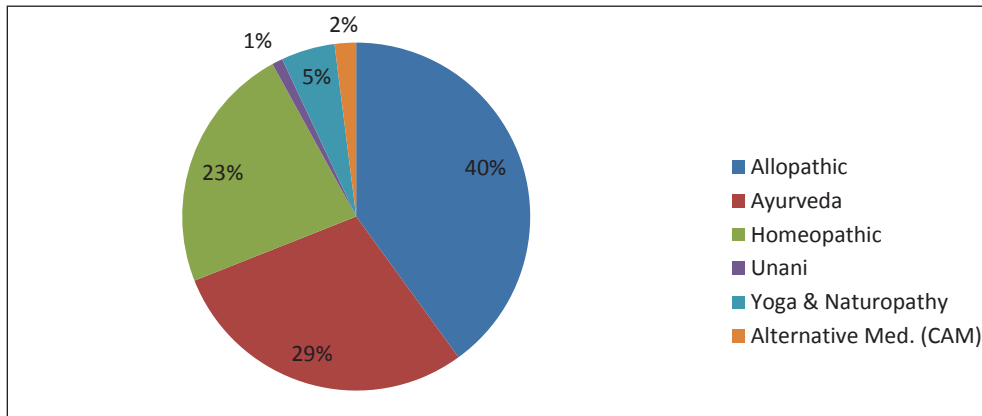


Figure 2

Preferred system of medicine, in case of medical emergency (Figure 3)

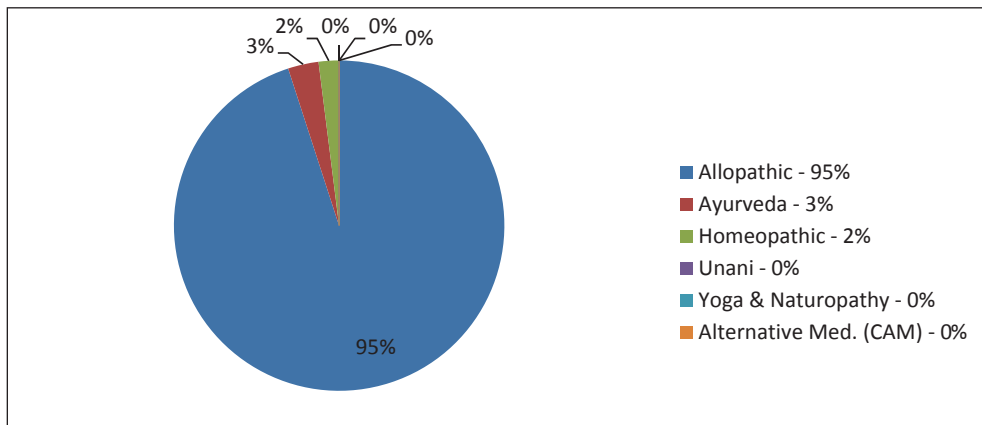


Figure 3

Preferred system of medicine, in case of surgery (Figure 4)

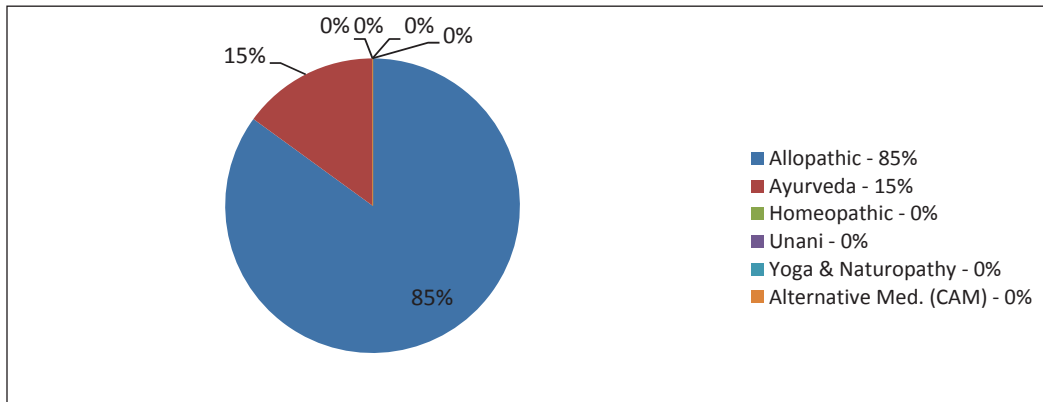


Figure 4

Preferred system of medicine, in case of chronic/lifestyle diseases (Figure 5)

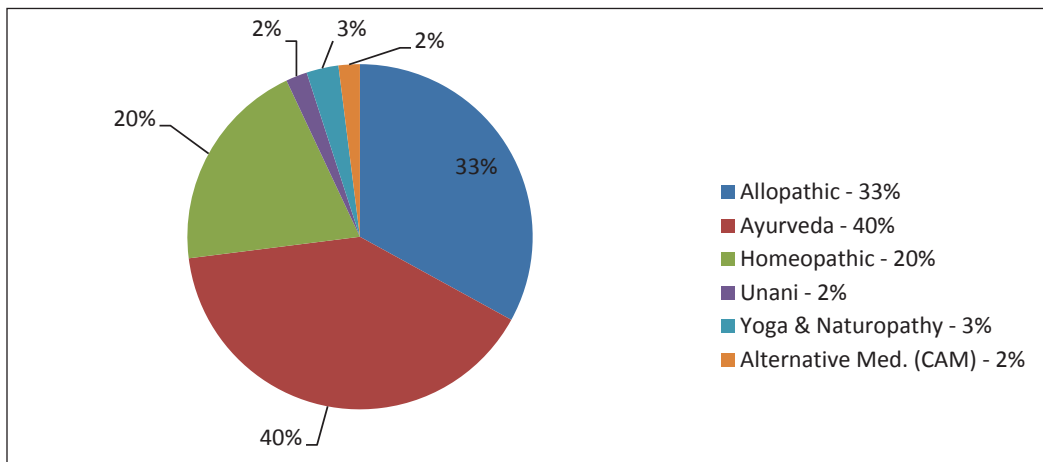


Figure 5

Preferred system of medicine, in case of common/acute ailments (Figure 6)

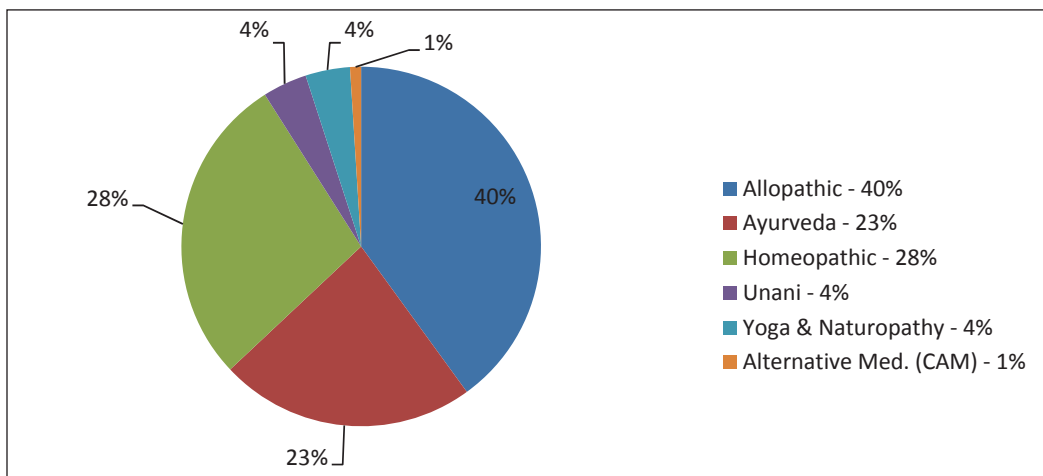


Figure 6

System of medicine, known for side effects (Figure 7)

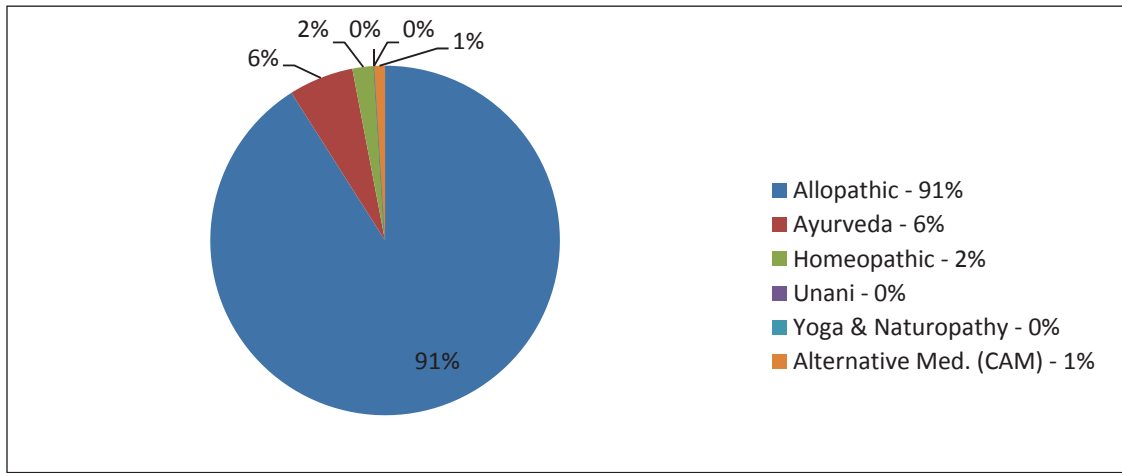


Figure 7

Preferred system of medicine for being convenient to use (Figure 8)

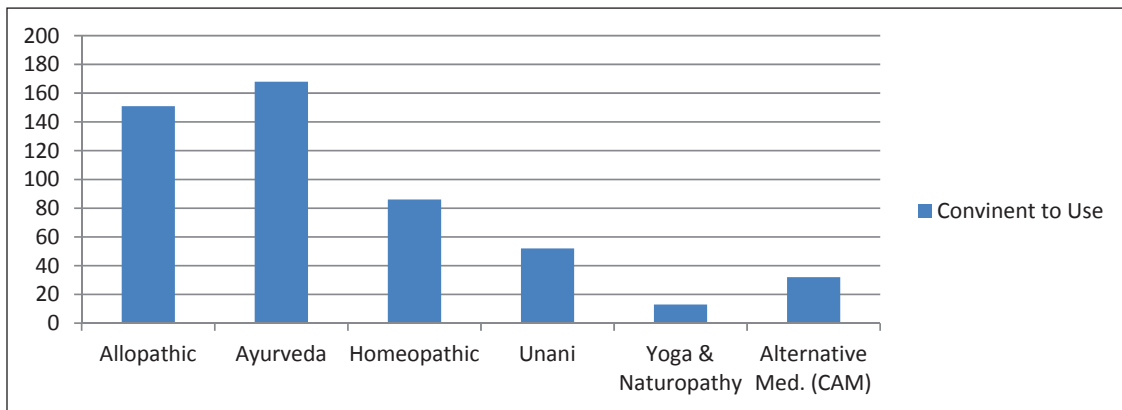


Figure 8

Responses regarding different system of medicine, in terms of required better financial investments for promotion and research. (Figure 9)

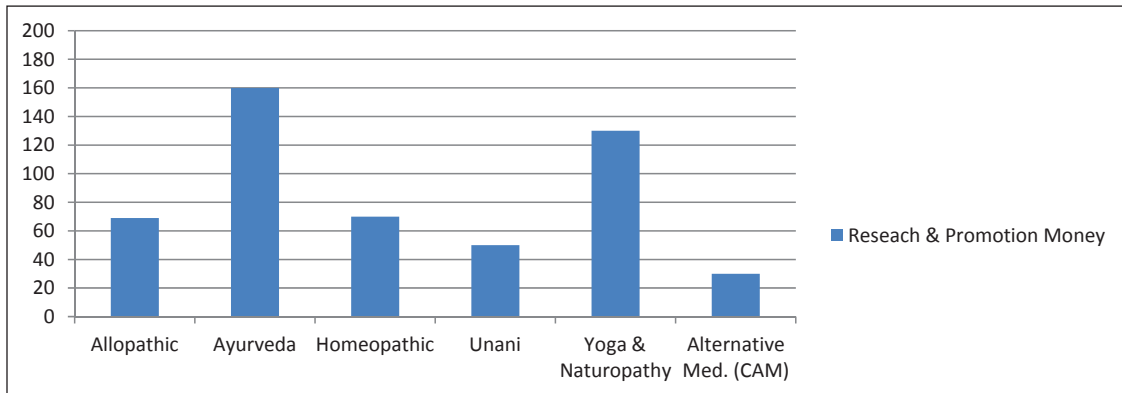
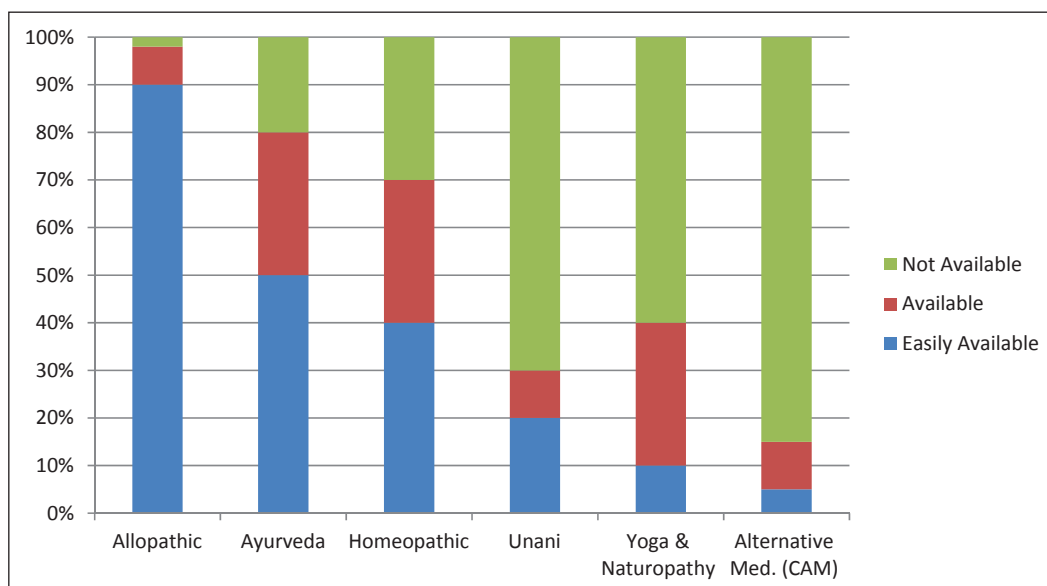


Figure 9

Convenient access to different systems of medicine for treatment. (Figure 10)



**Figure 10**

## 5. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

According to the survey report (200 respondents) 100% respondents heard about allopathy, 75% about ayurvedic, 70% about homeopathic, 30% about unani, 50% about yoga and naturopathy and only 10% heard about the Alternative system of medicine. People up to 95% prefers allopathic medicine in case of emergency, 3% go for ayurvedic, 2% prefer homeopathic and rest system of medicine are not preferred at the time of emergency. In case of surgical diseases 85% prefer allopathy 15% go for ayurvedic system of medicine. For chronic/lifestyle ailments 40% prefer ayurvedic system of medicine, 33% prefer allopathic, 20% go for homeopathic medicine, 2% prefer unani, 3% prefer yoga and naturopathy and 2% go for alternative system of medicine. In case of common/acute ailments 40% prefer allopathy, 23% prefer ayurvedic, 20% prefer homeopathic medicine, 4% prefer unani, 4% prefer yoga and naturopathy, 1% go for alternative system of medicine.

In opinion of people it was found that 91% of people experience side effects in allopathic medicines, 6% in ayurvedic medicine, 2% in homeopathic, only 1% in alternative medicine and none of them reported side effects for unani, yoga and naturopathy system of medicine.

Most of the people think that there is requirement of investing money in promotion and research of different systems of medicine specially Yoga and Naturopathy, Ayurveda and all others also.

While measuring the convenience of access, allopathic is most convenient being easily available to 90% of the people and alternative medicine least being easily available to only 5% of the people.

Public and private healthcare establishments can play an essential role in increasing the use of all the systems of medicine by educating the people regarding their availability, benefits and side effects. Further Government policies must promote the use of all the systems of medicine with strict control on standards and quality. Such a situation will help to obtain the benefits from all the systems of medicine.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Although allopathy is the most prevalent system of medicine, but Ayurveda and homeopathy always have strong hold in Indian medical practices. Yoga, Unani and Alternative system of medicine show concern for health more as compared to allopathy. Yoga being concerned with healthy body and mind is clearly elaborated in response, as an important outcome of this research. Preventive health, stress management and maintenance of work life balance can be more taken care by Yoga, naturopathy and alternative system of medicine.

Surgery being a disease which requires immediate and urgent concern is still preferred with allopathy. But may be with coming times and advancements in other system of medicines, they will be in light in future.

In case of chronic and acute illness allopathy, ayurvedic and homeopathy all are almost same preference. Others will have to prove themselves to come to the same platform.

Above 90% people also know allopathy due to its side effects. This paves a way for other system of medicine to provide better health to the patients. Majority feel that more stress should be given on research, promotions and availability of Ayurvedic and Yoga reflecting their faith in these systems of medicines. In future study of treatment satisfaction and cost benefit analysis for Indian population among different systems of medicine may generate need of new policies and reforms in healthcare industry.

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