

## **【P5 - 4】**

### **The use of alternative medicines of Korean Americans**

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Alternative medicines can be defined as any of the systems of medical diagnosis and treatment differing in technique from that of the allopathic practitioners use of drugs and surgery to treat disease and injury. The usage of alternative medicines has been growing rapidly in the U.S. The alternative medicines have received increasing attention from the community and mass media for the treatment and prevention of diseases. According to the result of a national study, almost 40% of U.S. citizens are currently using some kinds of alternative medicines. Moreover, the finding was that the highest frequency of use of alternative medicines has been related to higher education and income, especially in Caucasian Americans from 25 to 49 years of ages. The most commonly used practices have been reported to be vitamins and health foods, herbal therapy, chiropractic, relaxation techniques, massage, and acupuncture. Top reasons for using alternative medicine approaches have been identified as 8 categories. Similarly, Astin supported the fact in his national mail survey that significant numbers of Americans used various forms of alternative medicines. In the national study, theoretical models have been developed to explain the reason of using the alternative medicines. However, studies on alternative health care have been conducted on the general public or the majority population, not on Korean Americans, who are one of the fastest growing Asian populations in the U.S. Here in this study, a cross-sectional survey on 143 Korean Americans in the Greater New York Metropolitan area was implemented. Intercorrelations of hypothesized demographic predictors and preference of alternative medicines were obtained. Multiple logistic regression analyses were used to identify preference for alternative medicines. Most of the respondents answered that they preferred the alternative medicine because of philosophical congruence: alternative therapies are compatible with patients values, worldview, spiritual/religious philosophy, beliefs regarding the nature and meaning of health and illness. The results show that the respondents who are well educated, are with significant acculturation level, and have stayed in the U. S. for relatively short period of time preferred alternative medicines. The information derived from this and similar studies may provide potential value of alternative treatments among the biomedical community, governmental agencies, insurance companies, and managed care organizations.