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CAM therapies and conflict survivors: Could CAM therapies be part of Northern Ireland's recovery in mental injury from conflict

In 2000, the UK House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology's report on *Complementary and Alternative Medicine* indicated that the "Big 5" complementary and alternative medicine therapies, CAM therapies, including acupuncture, chiropractic, homeopathy, osteopathy and herbal medicine should work in cooperation within the UK National Health System. Following this decision, the Republic of Ireland followed suit with their own investigation of trends in CAM therapies and supporting integration of these. Northern Ireland, part of the UK, but physically located on the island of Ireland, has experienced daily violent conflict until the late 1990s and, more recently a coming-from-conflict environment in the early 2000s. Suicide, reported anxiety, and PTSD are on the rise in this recovering society. Although no continued and rigorous investigation of CAM therapies has been undertaken in Northern Ireland, work by McDonagh et al (2007) indicates a rise in CAM therapies that reflect trends in the UK and Ireland. In Northern Ireland, it was demonstrated that some of the most common health problems listed by users of CAM therapies were stress issues, mental health and depression. Furthermore,

with the level of mental health disorders in the Northern Ireland Study of Health and Stress 2001 indicating the highest percentage of respondent for anxiety, mood, substance and impulse disorders in the category of those exposed to conflict, such therapies are worth considering. In recent studies, CAM therapies are increasingly being used and examined by the US Veterans Association health care matrix and other providers of health care to veterans and survivors suffering mental illness after exposure to conflict. This paper conjoins these arenas and hopes to start dialogue around the effective co-use of traditional and CAM therapies in conflict-experienced persons.

Speaker Biography

Rosellen Roche, MBBS/MD, PhD, FHEA is a social anthropologist and physician who has over 25 years of qualitative and quantitative research experience. Her areas of interest include social deprivation, trauma, conflict, war and the synergy of understanding these consequences in medicine and medical education. A dual US/UK citizen trained in social anthropology and medicine in the US and the UK, Roche is an Associate Professor of Primary Care in the Department of Family Medicine at Ohio University's Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine at South Point Hospital, Cleveland Clinic Campus. Currently, she also serves as the Chair for the Research and Scholarly Activities Committee for the medical school.

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