


NAFKAM

## System approaches for evaluation of integrative medicine

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## Integrative medicine

- Integrative medicine is a partnership between patient and provider.
- Characteristics:
  - Multi-dimensional, extensive patient history
  - Clarification of health goals
  - Treatment based on best current knowledge
  - Conventional, complementary, alternative or traditional treatments separately or in combination(s) .

Fonnebo 2007

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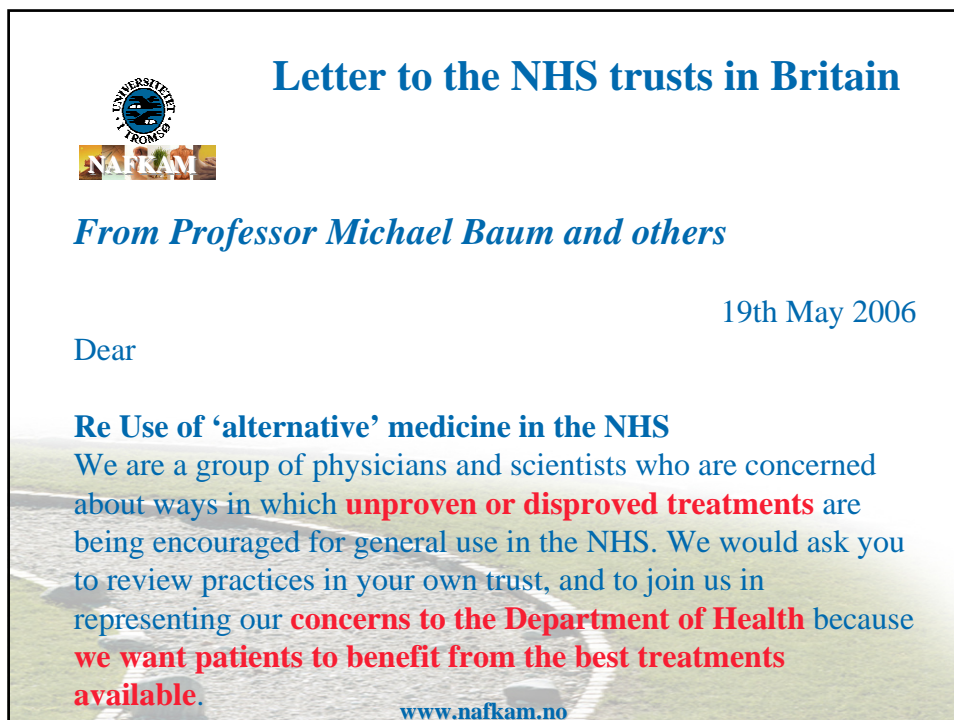




## Integrative medicine

- Rarely practiced by an "integrative medicine" practitioner
- Currently created and managed by the patient him/herself
  - Parallell medicine best describes current reality
- Very little existing research
- Research approaches must be seen in the light of CAM research

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## Letter to the NHS trusts in Britain

*From Professor Michael Baum and others*

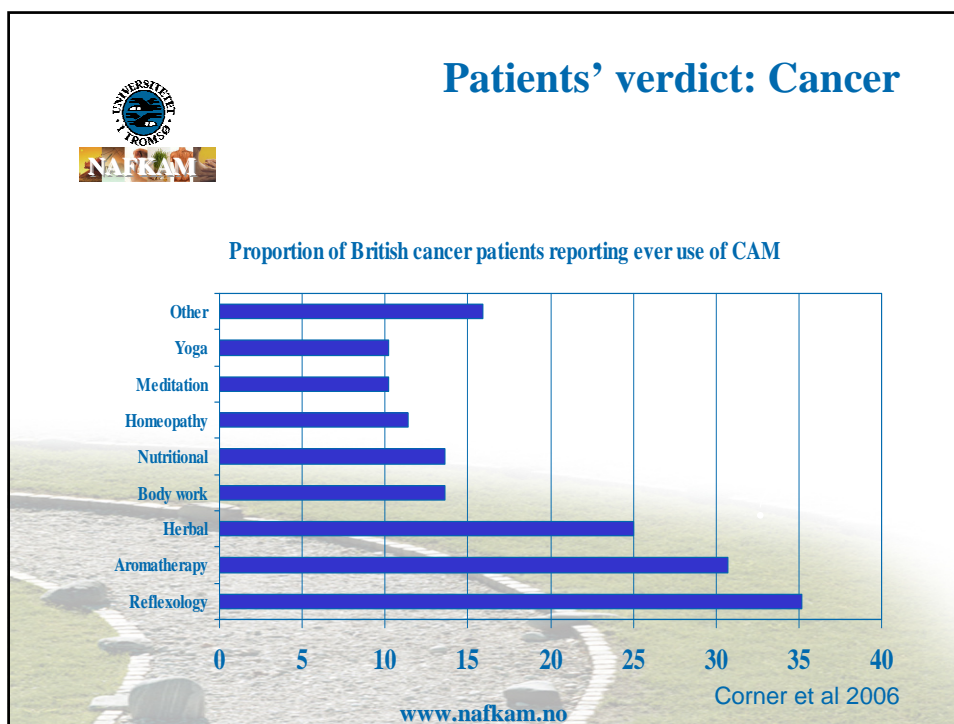
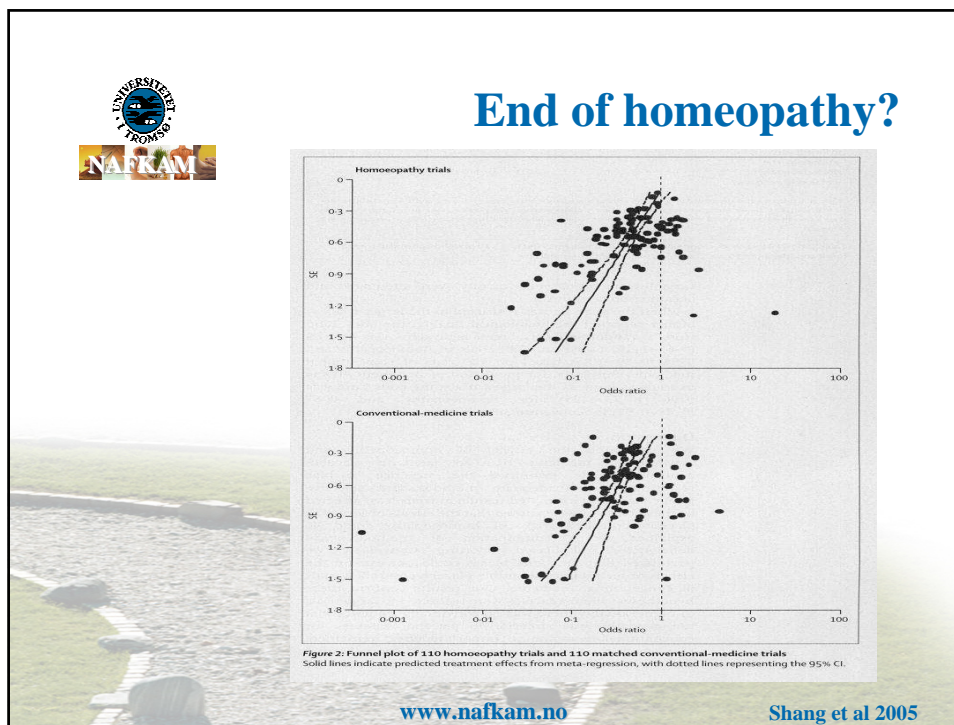
19th May 2006

Dear

**Re Use of 'alternative' medicine in the NHS**

We are a group of physicians and scientists who are concerned about ways in which **unproven or disproved treatments** are being encouraged for general use in the NHS. We would ask you to review practices in your own trust, and to join us in representing our **concerns to the Department of Health** because **we want patients to benefit from the best treatments available.**

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## Research status

- What do we know "works"?
  - Many specific treatments in conventional medicine have a documented effect
  - Few specific treatments in CAM have a documented effect
- Implications
  - Conventional medicine should not include specific CAM treatments
- **Incorrect implication**
  - **Patients do not benefit from seeking CAM or integrative medicine**

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## Belief status

- What do we believe works?
  - Non-specific treatments help a number of cancer patients
  - Treatment effects in CAM may be due to these non-specific treatments or the combination of non-specific and specific treatments
  - Our beliefs are not strong enough to be emphasized within conventional medicine
- Implications
  - Health personnel are one of the groups most commonly using CAM and integrative medicine

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## Research status in CAM


- Conventional medicine is looking for research pertaining to specific treatment according to diagnosis
- **They conclude: CAM does not work**
- CAM is looking for research pertaining to the ill person
- **They conclude: CAM has not been researched properly**

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**How does research  
differ in conventional  
medicine and CAM?**


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**Four main domains of health  
research**


- Why is something wrong?
- What is wrong?
- How does the wrong express itself?
- How can the wrong be righted?

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## How does the wrong express itself?

- Fundamental difference in some areas:
  - conventional medicine
    - As a person with an illness/disease
    - Diseases are more similar than the individuals who have them
  - CAM
    - As an ill person
    - Individuals are more similar than the diseases who have them




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## How can the wrong be righted?

- Fundamental difference in some areas:
  - conventional medicine
    - Combat the disease-specific causative factors, thereby enabling the defensive systems to regain the homeodynamic "optimal" status
    - In general standardize the treatment according to the diagnosis, with some adjustment for the individual
  - CAM
    - Support the defensive systems on a broad front, thereby enabling them to combat the disease-specific causative factors, and thereby regaining the homeodynamic "optimal" status
    - In general standardize the treatment mainly according to the person, with some adjustment for the diagnosis

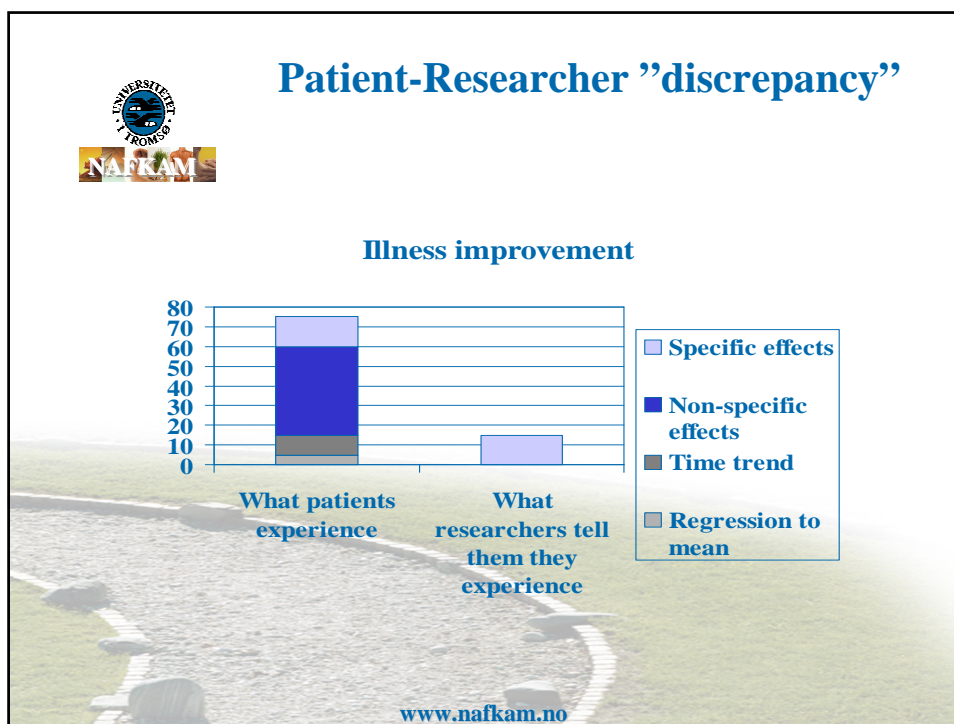


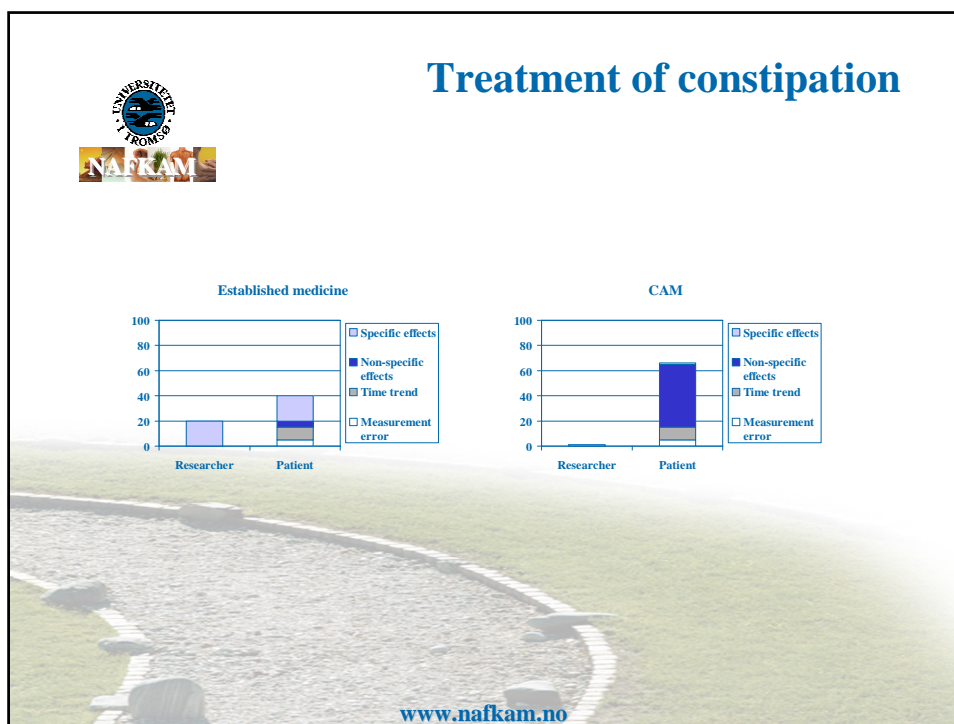
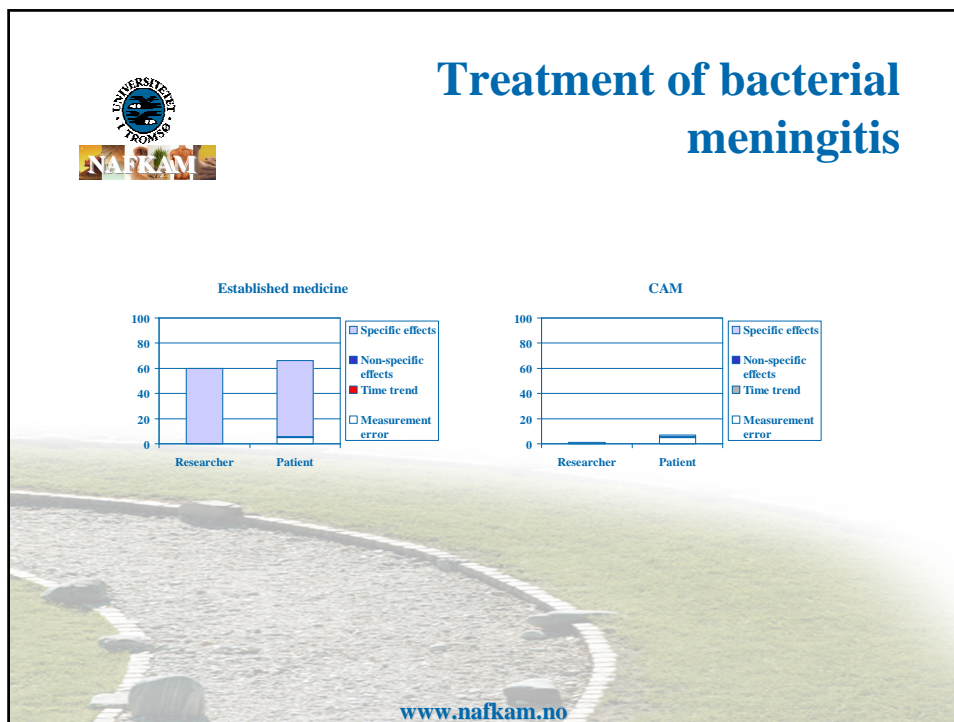
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# How do patients see and feel the discrepancy?

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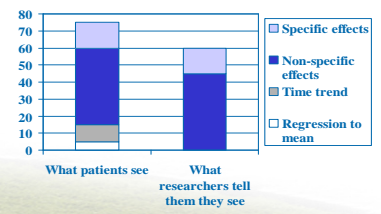
# Can we research the constipation-like conditions differently?

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## Whole system research

- Studies the effectiveness of specific and non-specific treatments
- Is closer to the patient perspective



Category	Specific effects	Non-specific effects	Time trend	Regression to mean	Total
What patients see	15	45	10	5	75
What researchers tell them they see	15	45	0	0	60


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## Clinical research

- In conventional medicine
  - Assumes that the system "works"
  - Research = Refining the treatment tools
- In CAM
  - Does not assume that the system "works"
  - Research = Evaluate the system as such
  - Research = **ALSO** Refining the treatment tools

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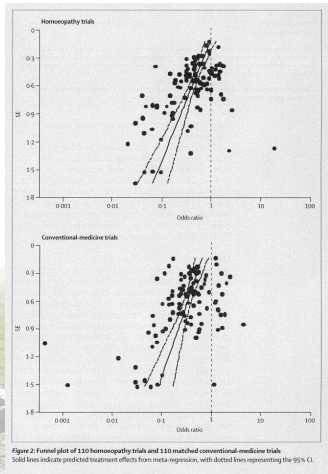


## How do we proceed from here?

"We emphasise that our study, and the trials we examined, **exclusively addressed the narrow question of whether homoeopathic remedies have specific effects.**

.....

**Clearly, rather than doing further placebo-controlled trials of homoeopathy, future research efforts should focus on the nature of context effects and on the place of homoeopathy in health-care systems.**"



[www.nafkam.no](http://www.nafkam.no) Shang et al 2005

