teaching of a high standard—apart from each teacher’s own experience, didactical collaboration among our teachers to ensure students are receiving a holistic education is at the forefront of our aims, supported by the fact that over 85% of our teachers have been with the college for over 15 years ensuring didactical continuity and (5) teaching methodology and didactics crossing all subjects, training students to adopt a holistic approach, enabling them to obtain a synthetic analysis with respect to the client resulting in a highly personalised health package.

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A collaborative post-graduate educational project: the MasterCourse in ‘Health Systems, Traditional and Unconventional Medicine’

Roberti di Sarsina Paolo 1, Tognetti Bordogna Mara 2, Gensini Gian Franco 3

1 Observatory and Methods for Health, Department of Sociology and Social Research, University of Milano-Bicocca
2 University of Milano-Bicocca, Milan
3 University of Florence, Florence, Italy

The authors outline the first Italian collaborative post-graduate educational project in the field of traditional and unconventional medicine that is the MasterCourse in ‘Health Systems, Traditional and Non-Conventional Medicine’. The project between the Observatory and Methods for Health (OsMeSa), Department of Sociology and Social Research of the University of Milano-Bicocca and the Charity Association for Person Centred Medicine, Bologna, Italy, involves as collaborative centres the Center for Integrative Medicine, University Hospital Careggi, Florence Ayurvedic Point School in Milan and Noopolis Foundation in Rome. The Masters Course project aims to provide participants with tools of theoretical and practical knowledge useful for the formation of professionals capable of integrating economic and management aspects with those of clinical care and different medicines. It also provides tools for quantitative and qualitative analysis of health-related issues, aimed at the design and evaluation of health systems at regional, national and international levels and the study of health inequalities. The MasterCourse confers power to tackle the issue of health, person-centred medicine, traditional medicine and non-conventional systems of health-based anthropology, professional growth and expertise to improve the management of the Hospitals, care institutions, health centres, in line with the new demand of care, provides tools for the development of managerial skills in key roles in planning, programming, monitoring and evaluation research, within the complex management of health services and nursing research. The new figure of the Manager of the ‘Health Systems, Traditional and Non Conventional Medicine’ with interdisciplinary skills is aimed at providing employment within the health system (national and/or regional) and the broader context of health systems. The Manager can be placed in the top position in the organisation and manage different types of structures dealing with health management of complex work units (hospital and/or regional) coordinating or consulting within public, private, third sector, as regional departments, regional agencies for health and health services, Ministry, pharmaceutical companies, epidemiological observatories, research centres, hospices, structures dealing with health, research on health systems and on traditional and non-conventional medicine and the University.

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Clinical phytotherapy today

Firenzuoli Fabio 1, Gori Luigi 1, Mascherini Vittorio 1, Vannacci Alfredo 2, Mugelli Alessandro 1, Gensini Gian Franco 2
1 Centre for Integrative Medicine, Department of Pharmacology, Florence University, Careggi General Hospital, Florence, Italy
2 Reference Centre for Herbal Medicine of Tuscan County, Florence

Herbal medicine is the use of medicinal plants for prevention and treatment of diseases: it ranges from traditional and popular medicines of every country to the use of standardised and titrated herbal extracts. Today, herbal-derived remedies need a powerful and deep assessment of their pharmacological qualities and safety that can currently be realised by new biologic technologies such as pharmacogenomic, metabolomic and microarray methodologies. Explanatory and pragmatic studies are useful and complementary in the acquisition of reliable data for both health caregivers and patients. Evidence-based medicine (EBM) was first conceived by Archibald Cochrane as a cultural and methodological approach to clinical practice to make decisions based on clinical expertise and the most intimate knowledge of the individual patient’s clinical situations; it de-emphasises unsystematic clinical experience as ground for medical decision making and stresses the rigorous analysis of evidence from clinical research. An important problematic of EBM is the difficulty to be easily applied in everyday practice, in an ABC system, especially in the field of complementary medicine and probably pragmatic studies can be a useful tool in reaching this major objective as part of the systematic process of knowledge. Here we report main possibilities and difficulties in applying EBM to phytotherapy, both in teaching and in clinical settings.

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