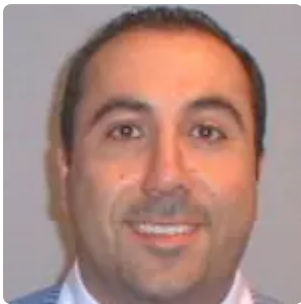


How Should Alternative Medicine Be Defined

There is still no strict definition on what alternative medicine really is. But presently, it borders on the broadness of description covered by what we know of as conventional or orthodox medicine. However, to define alternative medicine as we believe it to be, it may be a knowledge that is considered as unaccepted, untested and unscientific. All these were true if we are to look some years back. But since alternative medicine has been studied in the later years, employed by numberless institutions (such as spas and the likes) and accepted by many as cure to their ailments (even those that may be resolved through conventional medicine), this definition for alternative medicine may already be considered as obsolete. On other terms, alternative medicines are practices that may be considered false that sometime go to the extent of quackery. However, this definition is much abused by several authorities that have their own systems of beliefs and other things to support to. Still others would define it as practices that may not be tested, refuse to undergo tests and may continuously fail tests. On other peoples' view, this may be too unfair for those practicing the knowledge that comprise alternative medicine and too sweeping a statement since many have gained healing by means of alternative medicine.



This debate on the authenticity of alternative medicine is further made complicated by the number of practices that are labeled as alternative medicine, which has some [MICHEL ALKHALIL](#) truths in them. In actuality, alternative medicine covers procedures involving metaphysical principles, spiritual and religious underpinnings, new sets of healing approaches and non-European medicine practices. These are enough reasons why alternative medicine is much harder to accept in the West rather than in the East where most these practices originated. In addition to these, many proponents of alternative medicine contradict and many individual belief systems may reject others. Furthermore, critics of alternative medicine may further define it as therapy, treatment and diagnosis that may be performed legally by unlicensed practitioners. Yet, a number of doctors and physicians find good uses of alternative medicine when combined with the conventional medicine when they are trying to hit the balance. But there are more logical and unbiased definitions that are accepted by most. Many of which deal only on the safety and affectivity of the alternative medicine without the protection on economic interests, political views and turf protection. One such definition is that alternative medicine is a field of healing, therapy and diagnosis that are not based on controlled studies. There are however some therapies that were once covered by alternative medicine that are now accepted within the medical community since they passed approval over their affectivity. On the opposite, there were medical practices that are now disregarded within the medical circles since there are no profound evidences that prove their efficiency in healing. In reality, the term alternative medicine is quite misleading. Both critics and advocates of the said practices support this view. Some support the idea that Western medical practices are the alternative medicines since they were preceded by ancient practices, which is somewhat true. Others would claim that the term "alternative medicine" was only devised by advocates of conventional medicine to discredit the natural methods of healing. Detractors on alternative medicine claim that it is not worth as being accepted by the medical circles since it lacks components that may be used to support its efficiency. Yet many assert that once alternative medicine is fully tested, then there would be great rooms for wide acceptance.