

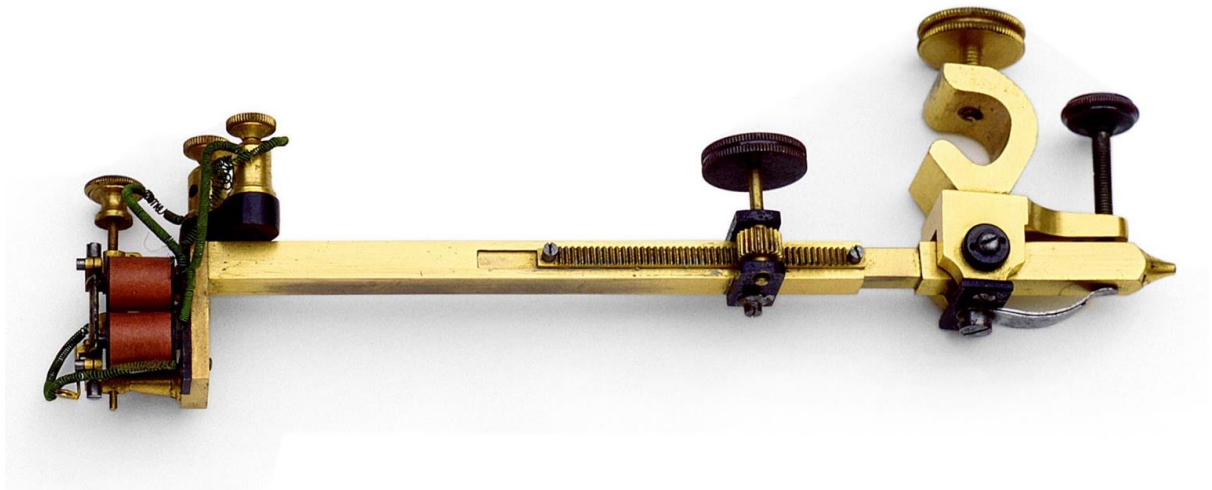
XXIX SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

# EMPIRICAL STUDIES IN PSYCHOLOGY

MARCH 31 – APRIL 2, 2023

FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY, UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE

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INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOLOGY  
LABORATORY FOR EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY  
FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY, UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE

XXIX SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

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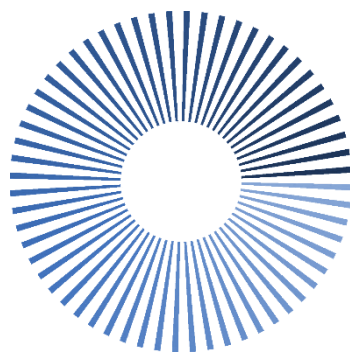
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BELGRADE, 2023

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**Cover photo:**

Deprez time-marker (G. Boulitte, Paris)

Device for setting a fine time base for kymographic recording. It provides oscillations for intervals down to 0.005 sec. A pen is attached to the plunger of an electromagnet. The movements of the plunger may be varied with a conical regulator. The device now lacks the pen. The author of this device is French electrical engineer Marcel Deprez who conducted the first experiments to transmit electrical power (DC) over long distances. Dimensions: 18.5 x 4 x 4.5 cm; Net weight; 145 g; Voltage: V DC = 2 – 4 V

From the collection of old scientific instruments of the Laboratory of experimental psychology, Faculty of philosophy, University of Belgrade

THE LATENT STRUCTURE OF TRADITIONAL, COMPLEMENTARY, AND  
ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE PRACTICES BASED ON PATTERNS OF USE

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Despite unknown efficiency, known risks, and associated adverse effects of certain traditional, complementary, and alternative medicine (TCAM) practices, the number of people using them appears to be on the rise. Existing taxonomies of TCAM practices mostly relied on either conceptual reasons, or they relied on attitudes toward TCAM, rather than its actual use. In this study, we sought to group TCAM practices based on their patterns of use. A sample of  $N = 583$  ( $M_{age} = 39.01$  years,  $SD_{age} = 12.10$ ; 74.4% females) participants residing in Serbia completed an online survey including a list of 71 TCAM practices. For each practice, they indicated if and when they used it to promote their own or their children's health (options: never heard about it/never used it/more than a year ago/in the past year/during the past two weeks). To evaluate the lifetime use of TCAM, we binarized all TCAM items to reflect whether participants have ever used a given practice (never using a practice was coded as 0, using it at least once as 1). After excluding items with frequencies below 5%, we performed an exploratory factor analysis on the tetrachoric correlation matrix for the remaining 49 items. Using a minimum residual method of extraction and oblimin rotation, we identified four meaningful factors explaining 42% of total variance: 1) Natural product-based practices (NP) comprising the use of products such as extracts and supplements of herbal and non-herbal origin; 2) Rituals/Customs (RC) which reflected the use of traditional medicine and religious practices, such as visiting monasteries; 3) New age medicine (NA) incorporating mind-body therapies and energy medicine practices; and 4) Alternative medical systems (AMS) such as acupuncture,

homeopathy, quantum medicine, and osteopathy/chiropractic. Factor correlations ranged from  $r = .18, p < .001$  for RC and AMS to  $r = .30, p < .001$  for NA and AMS. The latent structure we obtained based on the pattern of TCAM use corresponds closely to existing conceptual typologies, as well as to those based on attitudes toward TCAM. This suggests that consumers are sensitive to common characteristics of certain TCAM treatments and are more likely to resort to similar types of TCAM practices to promote their health. The existence of relatively independent factors of TCAM use opens the possibility of differential patterns of their psychological predictors and health-related outcomes.

**Keywords:** alternative medicine, traditional medicine, TCAM taxonomy, TCAM use, health behaviors

Acknowledgement: This research was supported by the Science Fund of the Republic of Serbia, #GRANT 7739597, Irrational mindset as a conceptual bridge from psychological dispositions to questionable health practices – REASON4HEALTH

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TO PREVENT OR TO CURE: HOW PEOPLE USE TRADITIONAL,  
COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

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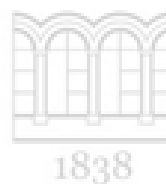
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To understand the reasons behind the trend of growing use of traditional, complementary and alternative (TCAM) practices we should first reflect on how people use them - to prevent disease/promote health, to treat medical conditions by complementing official medical treatments, or as an alternative to them. A total of  $N = 583$  ( $M_{age} = 39.01$  years,  $SD_{age} = 12.10$ ; 74.4% females) participants from Serbia completed an online survey including a list of 24

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