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## **Irrational health choices: What drives people to not adhere to science-based recommendations and resort to alternatives**

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While some health practices are supported by science and recommended by authorities, for others scientific evidence-base might be lacking or is yet to be established. Both non-adhering to recommendations and resorting to non evidence-based practices (typically in the domain of traditional, complementary and alternative medicine (TCAM)) can be detrimental for health. We investigated psychological roots of two types of health practices, focusing on their relationship with an “irrational mindset”, an umbrella term comprising certain cognitive biases, belief in conspiracy theories, superstition and magical health beliefs. In a preregistered study (N = 583) we contrasted how an irrational mindset contributes to the prediction of both types of health practices, above other relevant factors, such as sociodemographics, ideological beliefs, health status or relation to the healthcare system. Although the two types of health practices were positively related, they could be traced to different predictors: non-adherence was primarily explained by negative experiences with the health system, whilst irrational mindset did not additionally contribute. In contrast, irrational mindset consistently added to the prediction of different types of TCAM use, with magical health beliefs being the strongest predictor. We highlight the importance of tailoring interventions to the type of health practices so they also target underlying irrational beliefs, on top of providing correct information.