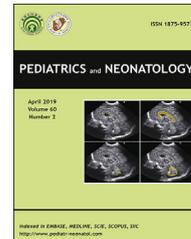


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Letter to the Editor

# Complementary and alternative medicine use in treating pediatric surgical diseases including inflammatory bowel disease



We read with great interest the paper by Ong et al.<sup>1</sup> and agree with their conclusion. As they have reported, the prevalence of inflammatory bowel diseases (IBDs) and the use of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) are increasing among pediatric patients with IBD. Defining the term CAM is very difficult as it includes a broad spectrum of alternative medical systems, biologically based therapies, mind–body interventions, manipulative and body-based methods, and energy therapies. Various types of CAM are used by individuals according to their nationality and locality. In addition, therapeutic or side effects associated with conventional medical therapy are not clear.

We performed a survey on the use of CAM therapies in Japanese children with major pediatric surgical diseases, including IBD, congenital gastrointestinal abnormalities, and malignant solid tumors.<sup>2</sup> A total of 153 (43%) of 355 mailed questionnaires were returned with complete responses. Of these 153 parents, 41 (27%) responded that they used CAM for their child. Children with IBD were significantly more likely to undergo CAM treatment than children without IBD (65% vs 21%,  $p = 0.0001$ ). Only 20% of the parents informed the attending physicians about CAM before its use in our study compared with 86% in Singapore and 35% in Malaysia.<sup>1</sup> It is important that the physicians caring for children with pediatric gastrointestinal disorders, especially IBD, be knowledgeable and discuss about CAM therapies with their patients and guardians.

## Declarations of interest

None.

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