

HOLISTIC MEDICINE: ACHIEVING OPTIMAL HEALTH STATUS FOR THE SOCIETY

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Medical practice and practitioners have made remarkable strides in the observation, evaluation and treatment of human illnesses. From ancient times, when divergence of thought dominated the understanding of illness processes to the emergence of various innovations leading to the objective measurements, and scientific methods which have culminated into effective therapeutic and preventive options. All these have distinctively defined the allopathic medicine, as currently being practiced. This tradition of evidence-based care continues to evolve, witnessing progressive knowledge tides that are converging on precision medicine, driven by big data science and advanced analytics, as applied to man.

Amidst these ground breaking scientific discoveries which have greatly improved the medical care of illnesses affecting man, there is a growing recognition that the varying components of the society contribute to improving health outcomes for members of the community. Establishing that best outcomes for the society are achieved when all the intercalated factors are uniting to provide a holistic care for every member of the community. Consequently, the scope of modern medicine is expanding to include complimentary, alternative and integrative approaches to the practice of medicine, as supported by strategic frameworks, and policies from the World Health Organization (WHO)¹.

With great optimism and enthusiasm, we present the April 2025 edition of *Annals of Ibadan Postgraduate Medicine (AIPM)*. This issue features manuscripts that examine the roles that different members of the community contribute to the improved health outcomes for each individual. These contributions highlight the impact that parents, caregivers, religious leaders, patients, stakeholders, and other key partners in promoting holistic care from prevention and treatment to recovery from disease. These articles guide us to reflect on the patient-centered care approach and pull different healthcare determinants and factors to improve the overall health of the patient.

A notable contribution in this edition examines the role of spirituality in medication adherence and health

seeking behavior in a bid to improve the overall health outcomes of patients. This is quite important in communities with deep-rooted faith-based ideologies, where it can be explored in the patient-centered holistic care approach. The global conversation around spiritually-informed care continues to grow, with increasing recognition of its place in effective health delivery towards achieving best patient outcomes^{2,3}. Healthcare professionals are now being encouraged to incorporate this understanding into their practice and integrate it in the patient-centered care approach to support patient outcomes⁴. This also underscores the influential role of religious leaders, whose guidance can help align spiritual beliefs with evidence-based care, fostering faith-based strategies that support, rather than replace allopathic medicine.

We hope that our readers and the wider scientific community find this issue both enlightening and thought-provoking. The insights within these pages offer a meaningful contribution to the ongoing journey toward a more inclusive, comprehensive, and globally relevant medical practice.

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