

NCCAM Professional Association Leadership Interview Guide

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A. Introduction

2 minutes

1. Hi, I'm _____, calling on behalf of the National Institutes of Health to discuss your perceptions of research priorities.
2. Thanks for taking the time to do this.
3. Is this still a good time for you to talk? It should take about a half hour.
4. Your responses will be secure to the extent permitted by law; what you and others say will be summarized in a report that will not identify you. With your permission, I'd like to record our conversation so that I can refer back to it in writing the report if necessary.

B. Where CAM fits in research priorities

7-10 minutes

1. I'd like to start by discussing research priorities. Given today's budget constraints, the ongoing dialog about investment in health research, and what patients are interested in, what do you think are the top three or four health research areas that really need more attention? (PROBE: What makes you say that?)

2. I'd like to ask you what comes to mind when you hear a few terms. When I say the term, just tell me what you think of. The first/next term is: [TERM]. (PROBE: What does [TERM] mean to you?)
 - a. Integrative health?
 - b. Integrative medicine? (PROBE: Do you see integrative health and integrative medicine as the same or different?)
 - c. Complementary and alternative medicine? (PROBE: Is CAM the same or different from integrative medicine? Integrative health?)
 - d. Integrating alternative practices into the healthcare system? (PROBE: Is that the same or different from integrative medicine? Integrative health? CAM?)
 - e. (IF ANY SYNONYMOUS) Is there a term you prefer? [USE THROUGHOUT REMAINDER OF INTERVIEW]
 - f. Which do you think is used most commonly?

I've asked you about these terms because they are often used to describe approaches to health or healthcare that are not historically considered part of conventional medicine. These approaches include nonvitamin, nonmineral dietary supplements; mind and body therapies, like meditation, guided imagery, chiropractic, acupuncture, and yoga; and others. Some people view all of these terms as synonymous; others see distinctions. So that we're using the terms in the same way, for the rest of our talk today, let's use the phrase "health practices that come from outside conventional medicine" to refer to the range of approaches to health and healthcare that are not part of conventional medicine but might be used in conjunction with it or instead of it.

3. How do you feel about the amount of research currently being conducted on these health practices that come from outside conventional medicine? Do you think it is too much, too little, or about right?
4. Thinking about your members [doctors, etc.] for a moment, what do you think they are most concerned about regarding research into health practices that come from outside conventional medicine? (PROBE: What makes you say that?)
 - a. What are you personally most concerned about regarding such research?
 - b. What organizations do you think should sponsor or convene research into health practices that come from outside conventional medicine? (PROBE: What makes you say that?)
 - c. What role should public sector research funding play in studying the potential value of health practices that come from outside conventional medicine?

5. Where do you get most of your information on this type of health research? Which sources would you say you trust the most?

C. Role of NIH and NCCAM

10-12 minutes

1. How important do you think it is for NIH to invest in studying health practices that come from outside conventional medicine? What makes you say that?
2. How important do you think it is for NIH to invest in strategies to promote healthier lifestyles and healthier behaviors? What makes you say that?
3. How familiar are you with what NIH is doing in terms of studying health practices that come from outside conventional medicine?
 - a. What do you think NIH is focusing on in integrative health research?
 - b. How about your organization's members—what do you think their perception is of NIH's involvement in integrative health research?
4. How familiar are you with the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine at NIH?
 - a. What areas of research do you think NCCAM focuses on?
 - b. What roles do you think NCCAM plays in integrative health research?
 - c. What roles *should* they play from your perspective?
 - d. Do you think of NCCAM as an objective researcher of health practices that come from outside convention medicine, being in favor of such practices, or being against such practices? What has given you that impression?
 - e. NCCAM's strategic plan sets out four guiding principles for the research that NCCAM will pursue. I'd like to read them and get your reaction.
 - The first principle has to do with scientific promise – Is there enough evidence that the research will lead to improved treatments for troubling symptoms or common health conditions? Or, will it lead to better ways to promote health and wellbeing?
 - The second principle is scientific inquiry – Can the approach be studied using rigorous, scientific methods?
 - The third is whether results of the research have the potential to change health practices –for consumers, health providers, or policymakers?

- The final principle involves the relationship of research to use and practice – Does the research address issues of safety, efficacy, or public use of CAM?

What do you think of these as guiding principles for NCCAM?

5. NCCAM's new strategic plan lays out priorities with the goal of focusing research in areas where science can have the greatest impact.
 - a. One focus is studying complementary approaches to pain and symptom management. How do you feel about that being a top priority at NCCAM?
 - b. Another is helping to develop effective, practical strategies that individuals can use to improve the healthiness of their lifestyle. How do you feel about that being a top priority at NCCAM?
 - c. A third is to enable consumers and health providers to make evidence-based decisions regarding how and when to integrate complementary and alternative approaches into health care and health promotion. How do you feel about that being a top priority at NCCAM?
6. Regarding NCCAM's role in providing information, are there information gaps or needs that NCCAM can fill? For example, act as a clearinghouse of evidence-based information, provide educational content, develop practice guidelines or otherwise adjudicate the research?

7. **Wrap-up minutes**

1-2

- That's all of my questions.
- Do you have any final thoughts on any of the topics we discussed?
- Thank you for your time.