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### **Patterns of complementary and alternative medicine use among Arab immigrants in Denmark: A qualitative study**

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**Introduction:** Migration patterns to Denmark in the last decades have led to increased ethnic diversity and associated challenges for the Danish healthcare system. Arab immigrants are the largest and fastest growing minority group in Denmark. This group may have different culture and health beliefs which may influence health-seeking behaviors and the decision to use complementary and alternative medicine. We aimed to explore patterns of complementary and alternative medicine use among Arab immigrants in order to increase insight into the hidden practices of this ethnic group. This insight will support general practitioners in provision of culturally competent care with likely impact on adherence to conventional medicine use.

**Material and Methods:** in this ethnographic study, 21 Arab immigrants in Copenhagen, Denmark were interviewed in Arabic. A saturation sample was recruited from mosques, a healthcare center for chronic diseases as well as snowballing. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, then audio taped and transcribed. Analysis was conducted according to Malterud's principles for systematic text condensation and guidelines for qualitative research.

**Results:** Different types of complementary and alternative medicine, referred as Arabic and Islamic medicine, used among this sample. These types included herbs and dietary practices; spiritual healing and cupping therapy. Arabic and Islamic medicine was mainly used for acute diseases; painful conditions; psychological problems and what emerged as conditions perceived to be related to possession, magic and the so-called "evil eye".

**Conclusion:** Arabic and Islamic medicine is a special form of complementary and alternative medicine, commonly used by Arab immigrants, which is deeply embedded in their cultural, religious and health beliefs. Healthcare providers should be familiar with diverse health practices and beliefs in order to provide culturally sensitive care and improve the quality of care delivered to ethnic minority patients.