

# research snapshot

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## How to Discuss Alternative Medicine Treatments With Patients or Their Families

### What is this research about?

There are a limited number of medical treatment for cerebral palsy (CP). Parents are aware of these limitations and often attempt to find other options. Complementary and/or alternative medicine (CAM) is an option parents often explore. Two CAMs are:

- Hyperbaric oxygen treatment (HBOT);
- Stem cells.

Guidelines for how doctors can best respond to parental requests for these treatments is discussed.

### What did the researchers do?

The researchers examined any previous studies they could find about the two CAM treatments. They evaluated the risks and benefits of these treatments and tried to find concrete evidence of the treatment being successful. The researchers questioned how doctors can best respond to parents who sought these treatments for their children.

### What you need to know:

Complementary and/or alternative medicine (CAM) is often researched by parents who have children with CP. These treatments are not thoroughly tested but carry no significant health risks. Doctors should be aware of CAM treatments and how they can best advise their patients and parents of patients.

### What did the researchers find?

There is no evidence that the two CAM treatments are effective. Both HBOT and stem cell therapy show little improvement in the patient's condition. These treatments do not have any severe risk factors associated with them in terms of health. They can create high unrealistic expectations from parents. Both CAMs also have high treatment costs. Doctors should be aware of the cost and benefits of CAMs so they can speak openly with patients and parents about these options.

### How can you use this research?

Practitioners will learn that there is no evidence to support the two CAMs discussed. It is also important to discuss expectations and costs of CAM treatment with patients and parents.

Policy makers will learn about the need of having support for decision makers to explore CAMs within the clinical program. Such supports will ensure doctors can focus on treatment and parents and patients will have access to unbiased information.

### About the Researchers

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### Keywords

Cerebral palsy, Parents, Children, Doctors, Stem cell therapy, Hyperbaric oxygen treatment, Complementary and/or alternative medicine

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