

## CAM in Europe – Ideas and Notions

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The present editorial wants to draw your attention, once again, to the current European CAM research situation which has been stirred and – for some people maybe even – shaken by the start of CAMbrella, the pan-European research network for complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), in Munich, in January 2010 [1].

Dieter Melchart already dedicated his editorial of the last issue of FORSCHENDE KOMPLEMENTÄRMEDIZIN / RESEARCH IN COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINE [2] to some of the controversial questions that seem to mushroom in the CAM field as soon as anything gets the go: envy-driven and so-called skeptical positions (as if, by definition, a CAM researcher was not a skeptic, i.e. a rational and scrutiny-driven person ...) say that first, you should not have started the thing at all, and second, it would have been better if the money had been granted to the skeptics.

But this is of no big interest, or: as Karlsson-on-the-Roof, the famous little flying man in Astrid Lindgren's children's story used to say, when he was caught with a prank: 'This does not make odds to a great mind!'

The much more interesting question is: What is going on in CAMbrella? For a general overview, you can consult the CAMbrella website ([www.cambrella.eu](http://www.cambrella.eu)) which gives detailed information on the entire working process and the different questions that will have to be answered by the end of 2012, when the final CAMbrella conference will be held in Brussels. In order to be informed on a regular basis, just subscribe to the quarterly newsletter; the first two issues are already available ([www.cambrella.eu/newsletter](http://www.cambrella.eu/newsletter)).

A major goal of the project is to deliver an informed proposal to the European public of how a definition of the various medicines could work that encompasses the whole of Europe (in its difference to North America or Asia) and at the same time does not eliminate the oddities and peculiarities of different regional traditions. Given the 27 member states and the 3 candidate countries (Croatia, Macedonia,

Turkey), this is not a small task. For instance, is the term 'Integrative Medicine' suitable for the European patchwork situation? This notion is heavily doubted by the editor in chief of this journal, Harald Walach [3], for instance. Should we use a term that takes into account the European aspect, e.g. 'Traditional European Medicine,' a term which was coined to counterbalance the traditional Asiatic medicines like TCM or TTM, or should we stick to the NCCAM definition, for the sake of interrelatedness? How about the classical term of 'Naturheilkunde' in the German context or 'Non-Conventional Medicine' which seems to be more prevalent in the northern countries?

One of CAMbrella's tasks – in fact a fairly fundamental one – is the establishment of a glossary of CAM in Europe that includes a comprehensive definition of what CAM means in the European context. As one of the journals in the field – and the most relevant European one in that matter – FORSCHENDE KOMPLEMENTÄRMEDIZIN / RESEARCH IN COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINE wishes to offer particular input to that debate that was opened at the ISCMR [4] workshop 'Complementary or Integrated? – Clarifying the Concepts' at the ECIM congress in Berlin, in November 2009. At that workshop, Claudia Witt, Associate Editor, and Harald Walach, Editor in Chief of the present journal both gave topical statements regarding the definitional issues, and the ensuing discussion with the audience was a friendly and open, yet conceptionally sharp debate.

'The targeted outcome' of the Berlin workshop was to start 'a series of, hopefully, clarifying discourses around the notion of integrative versus complementary medicine' [5]. To continue this process for its own sake and the whole field as well as to give an informed input to the discussions that have to take place within the CAMbrella group, the Associate Editors of FORSCHENDE KOMPLEMENTÄRMEDIZIN / RESEARCH IN COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINE will share their ideas about that subject in one of the following issues of this journal.

## References

- 1 CAMbrella newsletter, spring 2010. [www.cambrella.eu/newsletter](http://www.cambrella.eu/newsletter).
- 2 Melchart D: Yes, we CAM! Oder: Europa, wir kommen! Forsch Komplement-med 2010, doi: 10.1159/000289588 [English translation at [www.cambrella.eu/news](http://www.cambrella.eu/news)].
- 3 Walach H: «Integrative Medizin» – die Kolonialisierung des Anderen und die Notwendigkeit des ganz Anderen. Forsch Komplementmed 2010;17:4–6.
- 4 International Society of Complementary and Alternative Medicine Research – ISCMR. [www.iscmr.org](http://www.iscmr.org)
- 5 Complementary or Integrated? – Clarifying the notions. Satellite Symposium, ISCMR. 2nd European Congress for Integrative Medicine, Friday, 20.11.2010: <http://cosmos.kukm.de/start.php?>