### Alternative medicine - change and continuity?

Fill in the table using the information below, and decide to what extent alternative medicine represents change or continuity in the history of medicine:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of alternative treatment</th>
<th>Continuity What are the origins of these treatments in past societies?</th>
<th>Change Why have these treatments become more popular in the last 30 years?</th>
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<td>Homeopathy</td>
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**Big question:** Does the increased popularity of alternative medicine represent mainly change or continuity in the history of medicine?
Acupuncture

Acupuncture originated in ancient China 4,000 years ago. It is believed that acupuncture points encourage biochemical changes in the body which stimulate the body’s natural healing abilities, although there is no scientific proof of this process.

Acupuncture became popular in the West after 1971 when an American journalist wrote about his experience of acupuncture carried out by Chinese doctors when he had surgery in China. By the year 2000, there were 20,000 certified acupuncturists working in America. One third of them were medical doctors.

Many people choose acupuncture because it stimulates the body’s natural healing abilities rather than having to rely on expensive medicines which might have unpleasant side effects.

Homeopathy

Homeopathy was founded in the late 1700s by a German doctor, Samuel Hahnemann. It involves taking a small dose of a substance which would normally produce symptoms similar to those the patient already has. ‘Homeo’ means ‘like’ and homeopathy is the belief that ‘like cures like’. For example, a cold makes your eyes water and so do onions. Therefore, to cure a cold you should take a medicine made from a small amount of onion.

Homeopathy has become more popular in recent years because of high profile celebrities and royals who have endorsed it, including Prince Charles and the late Queen Mother. Some scientists, however, have dismissed it as ‘witchcraft’ with no evidence to back it up. They say that homeopathic medicines are no more effective than a placebo.
 Herbal Medicine
Since prehistoric times, herbs and plants have been used to make medicine. Every society through history has used herbal remedies to some extent.

A modern scientific study into the herb Valerian found that it produced 'significant improvement in sleep quality' without the hang-over effects commonly associated with modern chemical sleeping pills. Other doctors have estimated that about 20% of herbal remedies listed in a Roman medical book would actually have had beneficial effects. As people search for more ‘natural’ cures to illness, herbal medicine has seen a dramatic rise in popularity.

 Hypnotherapy
Hypnosis has been practised in Europe since Victorian times, but it has much older origins in the meditation practices of oriental religions. The modern therapist hypnotises the patient, and in that state of hypnosis the patient can be relieved of anxiety, overcome phobias or allergies, or even physical conditions such as travel sickness. Hypnotherapy is becoming increasingly popular to help women through the pain of childbirth.

As more people accept the important role the mind can play in dealing with medical problems, hypnotherapy has become increasingly popular as a way to address ‘modern’ health issues such as quitting smoking, losing weight, or dealing with stress and emotional trauma.