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## Insomnia: Alternative Medicine Popular

# 1.6 Million Adults Use Complementary or Alternative Medicine For Insomnia

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(AP / CBS)

### Quote

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Participants with insomnia were asked if they had used complementary or alternative medicine in the previous year. Complementary and alternative medicine was defined as including vitamins, herbs, massage, and mind-body practices such as meditation, yoga, biofeedback, and **hypnosis**.

Nearly 5 percent of participants with insomnia said they had tried complementary or alternative medicine to help them sleep. That translates to 1.6 million people in the general public, Pearson's team notes.

Almost two-thirds of survey participants who tried complementary or alternative medicine used biologically based therapies (including herbs and vitamins). Nearly 40 percent said they tried mind-body therapies.

(WebMD) Many Americans toss, turn, and try complementary and alternative medicines to ease insomnia. More than 35 million U.S. adults regularly had insomnia in 2002, and 1.6 million of them tried complementary or alternative therapies to get some sleep.

Those figures come from Nancy Pearson, Ph.D., and colleagues at the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM), part of the National Institutes of Health. Pearson's team checked data on more than 31,000 U.S. adults from a 2002 government health survey.

One of survey questions was, "During the past 12 months, have you regularly had insomnia or trouble sleeping?" About 17 percent of participants said "yes." That equals more than 35 million people in the general public, the researchers calculate.

Insomnia was more common among women than men, and among people who were obese or had

As those numbers show, some participants apparently tried both biological and mind-body therapies.

Participants with insomnia who reported using complementary or alternative medicine were asked if they thought their treatment had helped them sleep.

Nearly half of those who used herbal therapies or relaxation therapy said they felt that their therapy had helped their insomnia "a great deal," the researchers write.

The study doesn't show participants' satisfaction rate for other complementary or alternative approaches to insomnia. However, more than half said that their complementary or alternative therapy was "very important to maintaining their health and well-being."

The findings are "interesting" and deserve more study, but don't scientifically prove effectiveness, the researchers note.

The NCCAM recommends that patients tell their doctors about any use of complementary or alternative medicine to allow for complete medical records. About 60 percent of survey participants said they had told their doctor about their use of complementary or alternative therapies for their insomnia, the study shows.

**SOURCES:** *Pearson, N. Archives of Internal Medicine, Sept. 18, 2006; Vol. 166: pp 1775-1782. News release, JAMA/Archives.*

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