Lessons learned from the integration of traditional medicine into the world's leading healthcare systems

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Abstract

After decades of neglect, Traditional Medicine (TM), has officially and widely gained attention in recent years. The purpose of this perspective article is to provide a general and transparent overview of the actions taken and the functions of TM systems worldwide, in accordance with the latest reports available from the World Health Organization (WHO). The recommendations of this organization have taken a more structured form for countries by developing and publishing a set of comprehensive strategies for the years 2002 to 2005 and then 2014 to 2023 as a roadmap. In this study, the top 10 countries in the field of health according to the global ranking of the Legatum Institute in 2021 were selected, and their TM status was addressed in order to identify global challenges and areas for improvement in this field and to provide lessons for the health system policymakers. Overall, it can be said that the focus of most countries has so far been on the function of governance, and scattered actions have been taken regarding other functions, with countries in Southeast Asia such as China and Singapore having greater coherence. Replicating these experiences in countries like Iran depends on political will and the cultural context of society. Furthermore, the integration of TM into the healthcare system should not be limited to the use of indigenous knowledge, a certain level of services, and a specific group of providers.