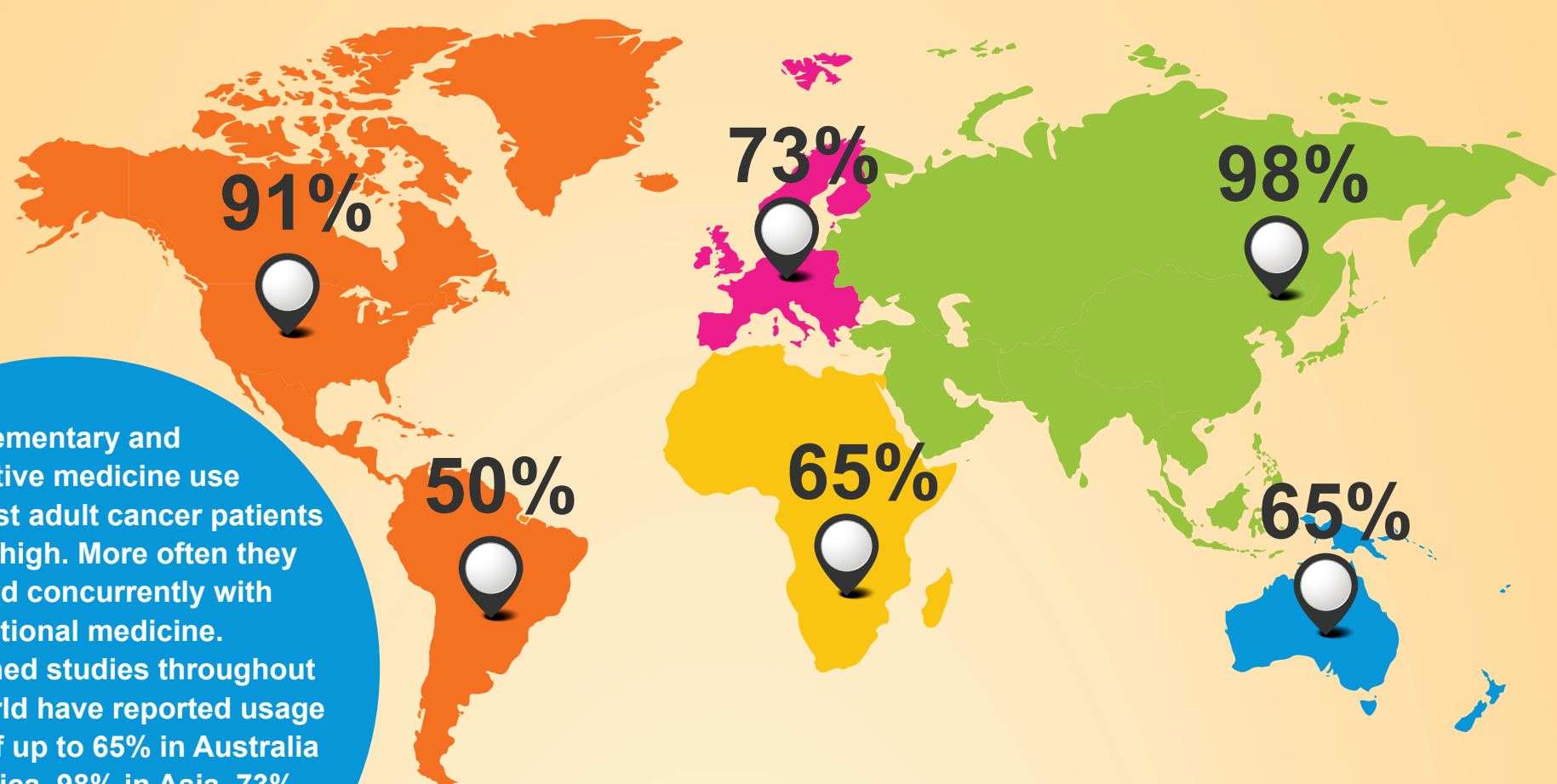


Guideline for discussing complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) with patients



Complementary and alternative medicine use amongst adult cancer patients is very high. More often they are used concurrently with conventional medicine. Published studies throughout the world have reported usage rates of up to 65% in Australia and Africa, 98% in Asia, 73% in the European Union, 91% in the USA and 50% in South America.

- It is important that clinicians have an awareness of the type of patients that are likely to use CAM, as well as a good understanding of the levels of evidence available for the efficacy and safety of specific complementary and alternative therapies.

CAM USER PROFILE



- Cancer patients who use CAM are typically female, younger, better educated, and of higher socioeconomic status than those who do not.
- CAM use is also associated with being married, medical comorbidity, advanced cancer, longer disease/treatment, greater symptoms, psychosocial distress and poor quality of life and engaging in self-help groups and other active coping strategies.

10 STEPS

for health professionals when discussing CAM use with their patients



Elicit the person's understanding of their situation

1



Discuss relevant concerns while respecting the person's beliefs

6



Respect cultural and linguistic diversity and different epistemological frameworks

2



Provide balanced, evidence-based advice

7



Ask questions about CAM use at critical points in the illness trajectory

3



Summarize discussions

8



Explore details and actively listen

4



Document the discussion

9



Respond to the person's emotional state

5



Monitor and follow-up

10

Reference.

Shofield P, Diggins J, Charleson C, Mariglian R and Jefford M: Effectively discussing complementary and alternative medicine in a conventional oncology setting: communication recommendations for clinicians, *Patient Education and Counselling* 79: 143-115, 2010.



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