

The IN-CAM Outcomes Database

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Introduction The Interdisciplinary Network for Complementary and Alternative Medicine research (IN-CAM) has developed a database of outcome measures of particular importance to CAM research to facilitate and support the assessment of CAM interventions through high quality research (www.outcomesdatabase.org).

The goals of the database are to make practical information accessible on a wide range of outcome measures relevant to CAM research, and to organize and categorize outcome measures within a unique framework of outcome domains that integrates measurable domains of health into a unified scheme. The key features of the database are as follows:

Searchable Outcomes measures in the database can be located through four search strategies:

1. Browse the collection of outcome measures using the Framework of Outcome Domains
2. Search for an outcome measure alphabetically
3. Perform a 'quick search' using a single keyword or phrase
4. Perform an advanced search using more detailed descriptors

Educational To help select appropriate outcome measure for research, important terms related to outcome measures are defined and attributes of a good outcome measure are described. The framework of outcome domains may be used to plan a research study by ensuring all relevant domains are addressed.

Interactive The database enables users to contribute to the Database interactively. Users may engage in a discussion board, post comments regarding specific outcome measures, rate measures for usefulness, and suggest new measures for inclusion in the database.

Conclusion The outcomes database will facilitate high-quality CAM research by improving access to outcome measures, inform users about appropriate use of outcomes, and foster an engaged community of CAM researchers.