

What Is the Applied Integrative Medicine Program?

The goal of the Applied Integrative Medicine Program is to provide healthcare professionals with patient care skills and knowledge based in integrative therapies that are practical and immediately applicable to their practice. The program includes live lectures, case discussions, hands-on experiences and resources that educate participants on evidence-based integrative modalities for personal and professional use.

The program includes a series of three-day intensives that are spread out over four months, with each intensive focusing on a different aspect of integrative medicine. Topics include meditation and other mind-body skills, yoga, food as medicine, dietary supplementation, manual medicine, aromatherapy, and more.

“As a practicing radiation oncologist, the AIM program provided a tremendous wealth of information and resources that were directly applicable to both my clinical practice and research endeavors,” said Adeel Kaiser, MD, an Associate Professor at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. “More importantly, it gave me the knowledge to understand when to apply such modalities directly, or when to refer to integrative specialties. With these tools, the AIM program has allowed me to better craft personalized treatment plans that not only address my patients’ cancers, but also the mind, body, and spirit repercussions from their malignancies.”

Intensive Contents

Intensive #1: Fundamentals of Integrative Medicine

Integrative medicine is a way of caring for patients that uses both appropriate conventional medicine and complementary therapies to create a treatment or wellness plan. This type of medicine does not favor one technique or philosophy over another but considers patient preferences and available scientific evidence to design an effective care plan with patient input.

Studies have shown that many people find relief from or reduction in pain when they use mindfulness-based interventions, nutrition and dietary supplements, acupuncture, yoga, tai chi, therapeutic music, massage, hypnosis, and chiropractic treatment.

This intensive will give participants an overview of the many approaches and modalities used in Integrative Medicine and provide them with resources that they can use with their own patients. Participants are also trained in self-care practices that can be used to prevent burnout and increase their own wellbeing.

One past participant of this intensive noted that they “loved that the first day was focused on how to make us better persons.”

Another past participant noted that they liked the “small group of people with different backgrounds that encouraged conversation and different perspective of diseases and patients.”



Intensive #2: Mind-Body Skills

Mind-body skills have been shown to help manage stress and increase energy levels through modalities like yoga, meditation and other mind-body skills.

In this intensive, participants will learn about and experience different relaxation techniques and therapeutic exercises that can help them treat patients with pain, depression, anxiety, or stress.

Some of the techniques taught in this course include but are not limited to: relaxation breathing, meditation, therapeutic art, and yoga.

One participant of this intensive stated that they “have recognized that patients who are open to meditation and yoga can dramatically increase their quality of life.”

Intensive #3: Food as Medicine and Detoxification

Nutrition plays an essential role in a patient’s overall health.

A National Institutes of Health survey found that the use of natural products, such as fish oils, probiotics, prebiotics and melatonin, were the most commonly used complementary approaches in the US. Over 50% of Americans take at least one dietary supplement and rarely communicate this with their healthcare professionals.

In this intensive, participants will learn how to evaluate patients’ lifestyles and symptoms to assist them in choosing a healthier diet and/or dietary supplement to enhance recovery, wellness or other goals. Resources will also be provided to help healthcare professionals guide their patients to reputable nutritional and dietary supplement information. The fundamental role of the gut in human health will be described along with nutritional strategies to help optimize gut health.

One participant “loved the way that this intensive was organized” and liked that “there was a really nice mix of technical and practical.”

Intensive #4: Manual Medicine, Exercise & Aromatherapy

Manual medicine includes popular integrative modalities such as massage therapy, chiropractic, acupuncture, exercise, reflexology, and acupressure. Aromatherapy is a popular modality that is often used in conjunction with manual therapies. Research has shown that these therapies are often helpful for patients suffering from depression, stress, pain, and other common medical problems.

Participants in this intensive will first learn about the benefits and characteristics of manual therapy while also discussing the different approaches of chiropractic medicine. Additionally, the psychological/physical benefits of yoga therapy will be explored. Participants will be provided with the tools to recommend physical activity in a way that optimizes compliance and custom-tailored benefits to patients with a variety of needs. The therapeutic uses of aromatherapy and benefits of therapeutic massages will be explored in an experiential format.

A past participant found that this program was “very supportive, encouraging and engaging while offering alternative ways to live a healthier life and techniques to teach patients.”

Conclusion

A participant who attended all four intensives found that they had “a perfect blend of evidence-based science and practical resources I can begin using right away.”

For more information, visit <http://www.cim.umaryland.edu/aimtraining/> or email Christine Barnabic at cbarnabic@som.umaryland.edu.