

**Poster Session II**

**#6**

***Health Policy Implications of Adult Herb Use in the U.S.***

Margaret J. Cushman, PhD, RN, FAAN, Pennsylvania State, University Park, PA

The purpose of the study was to examine predisposing, enabling, and health status characteristics of adult herb users; use of conventional and other CAM health services; and perceived benefit of herb use. Andersen's Theoretical Model of Health Behavior was used to explicate relationships between determinants, health utilization, and outcomes. The National Health Interview Survey 2002 and its Alternative Health Supplement served as the data source. The target population was US adults 18 and over N=31,044, and sub-population reporting use of herbs (5,787). Data analysis was conducted using logistic regression and structural equation modeling. The four dependent variables were herb use, use of herbs to treat, importance of herb use, and amount herbs helped. Predisposing determinants included age, gender, education, race, and ethnicity; enabling determinants were income, insurance, source of care, and access to care/affordability; health status determinants included measures of general health status and specific conditions individuals reported having. Conventional health care variables included having seen or talked to various health care professionals, the use of health care facilities and use of medication; complementary therapies included use of 16 other modalities. Variables for conditions treated with herbs and reasons for using herbs were also included in the analysis model. In contrast to previous studies, minority race and Hispanic ethnicity were associated with herb use and use of herbs to treat health conditions; as was the usual source of care. Race, ethnicity and source of care were also related to perceived benefit of care. Herb use was inversely correlated with both affordability and use of conventional care. The importance of using herbs was associated with the degree they were perceived to help treated conditions; while the degree they helped correlated with change in health status. Treated conditions associated with herbs having helped were largely common health problems rather than medical diagnoses.