

# Demographic characteristics and perceived health status of users of folk therapies in Taiwan.

[Tsai PS](#), [Ke TL](#), [Huang CJ](#), [Hsaio FH](#), [Wang MY](#), [Cheng YH](#).

College of Nursing, Taipei Medical University and Taipei Municipal Wang Fang Hospital, Taipei, Taiwan. ptsai@tmu.edu.tw

Erratum in:

- J Altern Complement Med. 2006 Sep;12(7):705.

**OBJECTIVES:** This study examined the prevalence of folk therapy use among Taiwanese adults and factors associated with such use. **SUBJECTS AND METHODS:** The data used in this study were from the 2001 National Health Interview Survey in Taiwan, which utilized a multistaged stratified systematic sampling scheme. Included in the current analysis were 11,290 individuals from 20 to 65 years. **RESULTS:** Only 1.3% of those surveyed were classified as users of folk therapy. Users of folk therapies were older ( $p = 0.002$ ), had higher annual incomes ( $p < 0.001$ ), and experienced more health problems ( $p = 0.006$ ) than nonusers. The two groups were comparable in the areas of marital status, employment status, gender, and educational level. Users had lower scores in the physical functioning ( $p < 0.001$ ), role physical ( $p = 0.041$ ), general health perception ( $p = 0.002$ ), and bodily pain ( $p < 0.001$ ) domains of the Medical Outcome Studies 36-Item Short-Form Health Survey. The two groups were not significantly different regarding the utilization and satisfaction with conventional medical resources and the domain scores of the brief version of the World Health Organization Quality of Life (QOL) questionnaire. **CONCLUSIONS:** Less than 2% of adult Taiwanese population reported relying primarily on folk therapies for their common physical discomfort. Users of folk therapies are older, have higher incomes, and have more health problems and poorer health-related QOL, but they neither make more frequent use of conventional medical services nor are they dissatisfied with the available services.