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# Traditional Indian medicine: Ayurveda, natural medicine and integrative medicine, Kliniken Essen-Mitte, Essen Germany

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The Department of Complementary and Integrative Medicine was established in 1999 as the first specialty for internal and integrative medicine at the teaching hospital, Kliniken Essen-Mitte as a model institution in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. [Figures 1 and 2]. The aim of establishing the institute was to scientifically study and evaluate different traditional complementary methods, as well as to integrate the study results into clinical practice so as to maximize benefits for public health

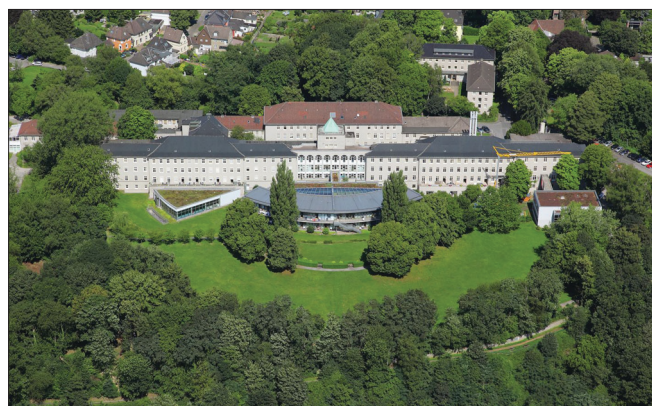


Figure 1: University hospital: Ariel view



Figure 2: University hospital: Inside view

care. In the inpatient (IP) and outpatient (OP) centers of the institute, patients are treated with European medicine and traditional Chinese and Indian medicine. German, Chinese, and Indian physicians work in tandem to ensure an effective integrated approach.

In October 2004, after a five-year period of scientific evaluation by the university board, the Alfried Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach Foundation at the University Clinic of Duisburg-Essen founded the first German 'Chair for Complementary and Integrative Medicine'. Dr. Gustav J. Dobos, Professor of Internal Medicine, was appointed to the chair as the head of the department. Apart from teaching and supervising doctoral theses, the chair also focuses on scientific research in therapeutic methods in traditional European, Chinese, and Indian medicine, and in mind body medicine. To carry out research projects in optimal capacity, the institute co-operates with universities in Guangzhou, Shanghai and Hong Kong, People's Republic of China, and the Benson-Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine, Harvard Medical School in Boston, United States.

Besides the task of teaching students, the chair and institution focus on clinical and basic research in traditional European, Chinese, and Indian medicine as well as mind body medicine. Dr. Anna Paul, who is an experienced mind body medicine teacher involved in many research activities, leads the mind body medicine department.

In 2002, the OP department was established, focusing

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on natural medicine and Chinese medicine. Dr. Thomas Rampp, MD, is the director of this department where Chinese and modern doctors trained in complementary and alternate medicine treat the patients.

To date, two professorial theses and 20 doctoral theses have been completed at the chair of complementary medicine. Currently, the chair supervises 43 theses in the relevant subject areas of traditional complementary medicine as mentioned above. At the same time, the chair of complementary medicine offers advanced training for physicians in complementary medicine, traditional Indian medicine, and in traditional Chinese medicine.

### Establishment of traditional Indian medicine/Ayurveda

In 2008, the traditional Indian medicine/Ayurveda department was established with the help of Dr. Syal Kumar, MD. In May 2008, the research department began a clinical study in Indian medicine, which was promoted by the Deichmann Foundation. A randomized controlled study for chronic low back pain was thus initiated by Dr. Syal Kumar, MD, Professor Dr. Andreas Michaelson, MD, Dr. Thomas Rampp, MD, and Professor Dr. Gustav Dobos. The ethics committee of the University of Duisburg-Essen has assessed this project positively. The clinical assessment of this study has already been completed and its outcome is expected this year. Another research project on irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), which is a randomized controlled double-blind cross-over study, is underway under the supervision of Professor Jost Langhorst, MD, who is the professor for gastroenterology at our hospital. Several projects for clinical and basic research with regard to Indian medicine/Ayurveda are being planned in our department.

Parallel to the research activities in 2009 February, the department of Indian medicine was established for patient care in the OP department. The department is headed by Dr. Syal Kumar with four therapists. After the successful integration at the OP level, the IP treatment facilities were also introduced at our 60-bedded integrative medicine hospital. Treatments are carried out for muscle and joint diseases, skin problems, neurological disorders, gastrointestinal tract (GIT) disorders, psychosomatic problems, at our OP and IP departments. Two to three weeks of *panchakarma* treatment are done for chronic cases with classical preparations. In the OP department, patients interested in intensive *panchakarma* treatments in India or those who need to go to Indian hospitals for additional weeks of treatment get the first consultation and preparatory treatments. The follow-ups of the same

are also carried out in the hospital. The department has tie-ups with reputed hospitals in India where we advise our patients to get treated. In this way, European patients get an opportunity to receive Ayurvedic medical services at our institute.

In the same year of 2009, a course for doctors to learn Ayurvedic medicine was started under the University of Duisburg-Essen. The aim of the course is to provide exposure in pharmacological and clinical aspects of Ayurveda by qualified Ayurvedic doctors from India and Europe. The course is conducted in the weekends of every month for one and a half years. As part of the training program, after this course, interested students join Indian colleges with which we collaborate, to have a practical study with more clinical exposure. At present, the third course of this is in progress. Apart from this, a separate course for training the therapists is conducted for a duration of a year with practical and theoretical classes everyday.

In August 2009, the organization for the academic professional society of Indian medicine, 'Akademische Fachgesellschaft Indische Medizin' was founded. Its members are doctors from the Department of Internal Medicine of the hospital, complementary and integrative medicine doctors, and students from the Ayurveda course. The aim of the organization is to promote Ayurveda in Germany, support its research activities, and to infuse quality into clinical practice. The president of the organization is Dr. Jonto Saha, MD and the secretary is Dr. Syal Kumar. The organization works closely with parallel organizations in India.

As a part of its mission, the department looks forward to integrating Indian medical system/Ayurveda into the medical community of Germany. Ayurveda, in its capacity, is a strong and traditional medical system, providing several solutions for treating/minimizing the effects of several chronic diseases where modern and high-tech medicine has showed limitations. Also, based on the latest trends, especially in German society, Ayurveda appears to be a medical system with a growing demand.

### Declaration of conflicting interests

The authors are faculties of the institute discussed in this article.

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