Abstract

**Background:** Chronic pain is a multifaceted, complex disorder resulting in disability that poses a significant impact on the quality of life for those afflicted and serious effects on society and the health care system at large. Available conventional treatments for chronic pain are not fully effective, resulting in more people turning to Complementary and Alternative Medicine to manage it. This area encompasses any medical system or therapy that resides outside of the conventional medical treatments of a given society, for example: acupuncture, chiropractic, massage, or Traditional Chinese Medicine. One important direction of research in this area is to understand the prevalence of use along with attitudes and needs towards these therapies in the population.

**Objective:** The purpose of this scoping review is to provide a synthesis of the associated factors of CAM use that have been found in the literature in adults with chronic pain.

**Methods:** A scoping review methodology enhanced by Levac, Colquhoun & Brien (2010) was used to inform this project. A search of publications from 2007 – 2017 was completed of the following databases: CINAHL, Scopus, Embase, AMED, and PubMed. Two independent reviewers (JL, AM) completed the title and abstract screen for inclusion into the review.

**Results:** The decision to use CAM in the treatment of chronic pain is influenced by a multitude of factors, many of which have yet to be identified. Significant associations from the literature are organized into four themes: sociodemographic factors, personal factors, health factors, and contextual factors. Indicators of using CAM to treat chronic pain emerged and include female gender, younger adult, educated, insured, higher severity of pain that is difficult to manage,
living with comorbidities, with more proactive views about their health.

**Conclusions:** This review provides an understanding of significant factors that are associated with the use of CAM in adults with chronic pain, which will inform health care planning and management of chronic pain for health care providers, policy makers, and health care organizations to enhance future practice.

*Keywords:* complementary and alternative medicine; integrative medicine; chronic pain; adult; scoping review; associated factors