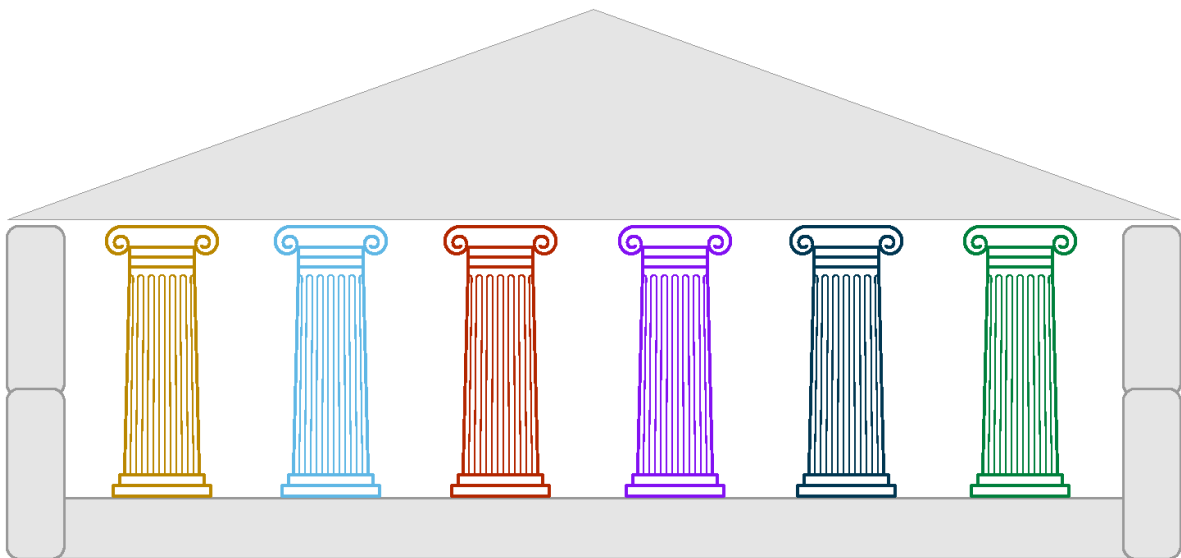


# NAFKAM

Norway's National Research Center in  
Complementary and Alternative Medicine

Strategic plan 2021 – 2025



Research and Dissemination of Information on  
Complementary and Alternative Medicine

## Table of contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Foreword .....  | 3  |
| Executive Summary .....   | 4  |
| NAFKAM at a glance .....  | 5  |
| Past .....  | 5  |
| Present .....   | 6  |
| Future .....  | 6  |
| NAFKAM's assignment, mission and vision constitutes the foundation of this strategic plan ..... | 7  |
| Our assignment .....  | 7  |
| Our mission.....  | 7  |
| Our vision .....  | 7  |
| NAFKAM's values are the four cornerstones of this strategic plan .....                          | 8  |
| Involvement of patients, the public, CAM providers and conventional health care providers ..... | 8  |
| Patient safety.....   | 10 |
| Objectivity .....   | 10 |
| Transparency .....  | 11 |
| NAFKAM's prioritized areas make up the six pillars of this strategic plan .....                 | 12 |
| NAFKAM's online CAM databases .....   | 12 |
| A health-issue-oriented focus .....   | 13 |
| Informed decision making.....   | 14 |
| Systematic reviews .....  | 15 |
| Strengthening the Nordic collaboration.....   | 16 |
| A self-help-oriented focus .....  | 17 |
| NAFKAM's multidisciplinary team makes up the roof of this strategic plan.....                   | 18 |
| Impact evaluation of NAFKAM .....   | 19 |
| Attachments .....   | 19 |

## Foreword

On behalf of NAFKAM, I am very pleased to present our new strategic plan 2021-2025. This strategic plan is the result of a systematic step-by-step process that included a thorough analysis of a national survey among our stakeholders, a scan of our operational field, and much thought and discussions among staff and with our advisory board. This plan builds on the formal assignment that has been given to us by the Norwegian Ministry of Health and Care Services and the Directorate of Health, the NAFKAM evaluation report by Oxford Research AS, and the strategic plans of the UiT Arctic University of Norway and its Department of Community Medicine (ISM). The plan is also informed by the WHO Traditional Medicine Strategy 2014-2023.

The content of this five-year plan reflects our national center's ambition for excellence in research and dissemination of information on Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM). For us excellence means that our activities have impact: that our research and information services are widely used and support people in making informed and safe choices about the use of CAM. In this strategic plan, we also communicate the future challenges in our field. Polarized viewpoints continue to dominate the public debate over CAM in Norway. It is therefore of high importance to facilitate the opportunity for constructive dialogue and decision making that is based on facts and evidence. Furthermore, with the increased popularity of social media as source of information, the number of people that use CAM self-management strategies to improve their own health has grown. This requires specific attention on how to monitor and reduce the possible risks of CAM as self-medication.

Throughout its twenty years of existence, NAFKAM has become the main source for research and information on CAM in Norway and acquired a strong position in the international field. With this new strategic plan, we are confident in our national center's ability to further develop and improve our services to support health care users, patients, providers, health care professionals and health authority officials in the years ahead.

Professor Miek Jong  
Head of NAFKAM, February 2021

## Executive Summary

NAFKAM's vision is to deliver excellence in research and information dissemination on Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM). NAFKAM strives for impact, meaning that its research and information services are widely used in Norway and of support to the Norwegian people in making informed and safe choices about possible use of CAM.

NAFKAM has four core values that are the cornerstones of future activities. The first cornerstone is to involve patients, public, CAM providers and conventional health care providers in activities. The second cornerstone is that patient safety is within the focus of every activity initiated by NAFKAM. The third cornerstone is objectivity. NAFKAM maintains an unbiased position that is based on rigorous and objective evaluations adhering to high scientific research standards. The fourth cornerstone is transparency, meaning that NAFKAM communicates clearly about its assignment and tasks, and undertakes its activities in an open, honest, and accountable way.

To achieve greater impact, NAFKAM has identified six focus areas for the years to come. The first focus is to improve navigation and usability of NAFKAM's online CAM databases. The second is to focus on use and safety of CAM for health issues that have high impact on quality of life. Developing appropriate communication tools to assist safe and informed decision-making on CAM use constitutes the third focus area. The fourth focus area is to perform systematic reviews on CAM. In a fifth focus area, NAFKAM will strengthen its collaborative activities with the other Nordic countries Denmark, Finland, Iceland, and Sweden. The sixth and last focus area is that NAFKAM will extend its focus beyond practitioner-provided interventions to effectiveness and safety of self-use of CAM.

This strategic plan 2021-2025 will guide NAFKAM in its yearly and daily activities. These activities will be performed by a multidisciplinary team of communication specialists and researchers to create more synergy. NAFKAM will regularly and transparently measure its achieved impact and disseminate it in publicly available sources.

## NAFKAM at a glance

### Past

2000-2019

In 1997, Norway's Directorate for Health and Social Affairs appointed a committee to conduct a study of the various aspects of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM). One of the committee's recommendations was to establish a national research center for unbiased, independent research into CAM. NAFKAM, Norway's National Research Center in Complementary and Alternative Medicine, then opened in 2000.

In 2002, Norway and China signed a three-year action plan on health collaboration that included Traditional Chinese Medicine. NAFKAM was given the task by the Norwegian Directorate of Health to take care of the professional responsibility for this part of the collaboration. The National CAM Information Center (NIFAB) was established as a separate unit within NAFKAM from 2005 and merged with NAFKAM in 2018.

In 2008, NAFKAM was appointed as the first [World Health Organization \(WHO\) collaborating center in Northern Europe for traditional, complementary, and integrative medicine](#).

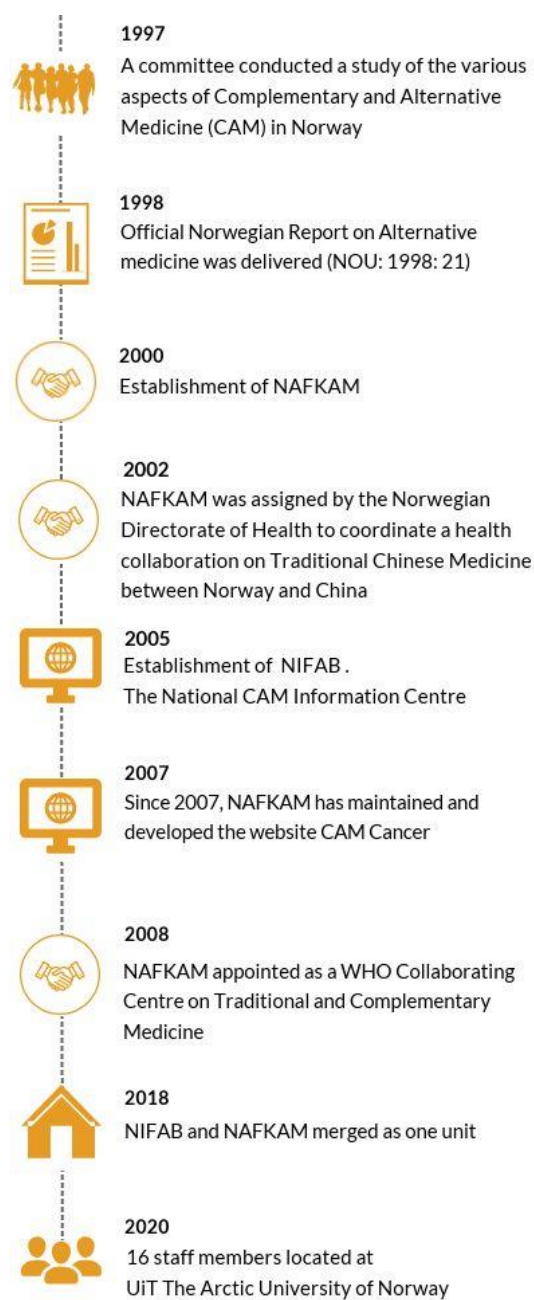


Figure 1 NAFKAM's timeline © NAFKAM

## Present

### 2020

At the end of 2020, NAFKAM had 16 staff members (14,1 full-time equivalent) and is located within the Department of Community Medicine at UiT The Arctic University of Norway in Tromsø. NAFKAM is the main national source for research and information on CAM and has a strong position in the international CAM field. At the beginning of 2020, the WHO and NAFKAM agreed to continue collaborative activities for another four years. The majority of stakeholders (73%) see no need that NAFKAM takes up any other tasks than they currently have<sup>1</sup>. They highly prioritize that NAFKAM continues to perform research on CAM (88%), monitor the safety of CAM (86%), provide information on CAM via the nafkam.no website (85%), and runs surveys among the Norwegian population or specific (patient) groups (81%) as to provide insights on CAM use. Of NAFKAM's current focus areas, patient safety is regarded to be of high importance by most stakeholders (93%). Focus on research and information on CAM for chronic pain and cancer is also thought to be of high importance by the majority (73-85%)<sup>1</sup>.

## Future

### 2021-2025

NAFKAM's ambition is to continuously strive for excellence in research and dissemination of information on CAM. Excellence meaning:

- NAFKAM's research and information services are widely used and are of support to people
- High, reliable and valid scientific and quality standards
- Transparent approaches and procedures
- Strong national and international collaborations
- Patient/public involvement and CAM provider/conventional provider involvement in all relevant projects

---

<sup>1</sup> Report Stakeholders NAFKAM survey (2020): see appendix 1

## NAFKAM's assignment, mission and vision constitutes the foundation of this strategic plan

NAFKAMs assignment, mission and vision constitutes the foundation of this strategic plan

### Our assignment

- By conducting its own research as well as contributing to and coordinating other research activities in the field, NAFKAM shall develop knowledge about CAM and how it can potentially be helpful in addressing illness and health issues.
- NAFKAM develops and offers research-based and quality-assured information on the potential effectiveness and risk of common complementary and alternative treatments
- NAFKAM monitors and reports possible risks related to complementary and alternative medicine to the Norwegian Health Authorities

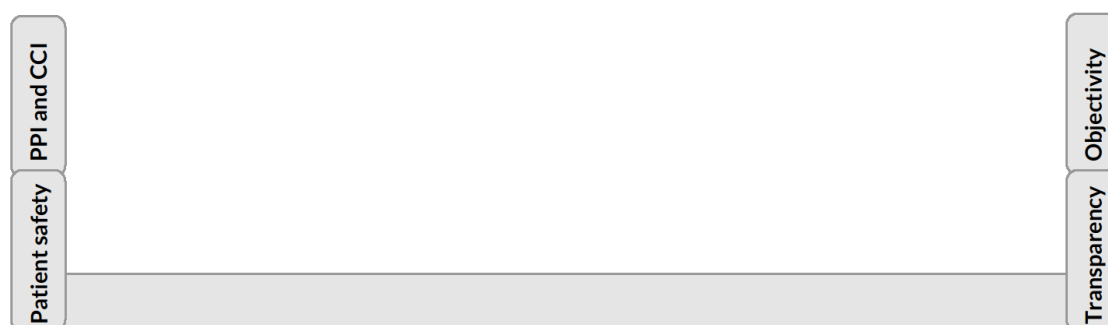
### Our mission

Enabling people to make informed and safe choices with regard to the use of complementary and alternative medicine

### Our vision

Excellence in research and dissemination of information on complementary and alternative medicine

NAFKAM's values are the four cornerstones of this strategic plan



## Involvement of patients, the public, CAM providers and conventional health care providers

Involving the health care user, patient, and/or public in research activities and other projects is one of the four cornerstones of this strategic plan. Besides Patient and Public Involvement (PPI), it is just as important for NAFKAM to carry out its activities with CAM providers and Conventional health care provider Involvement (CCI).

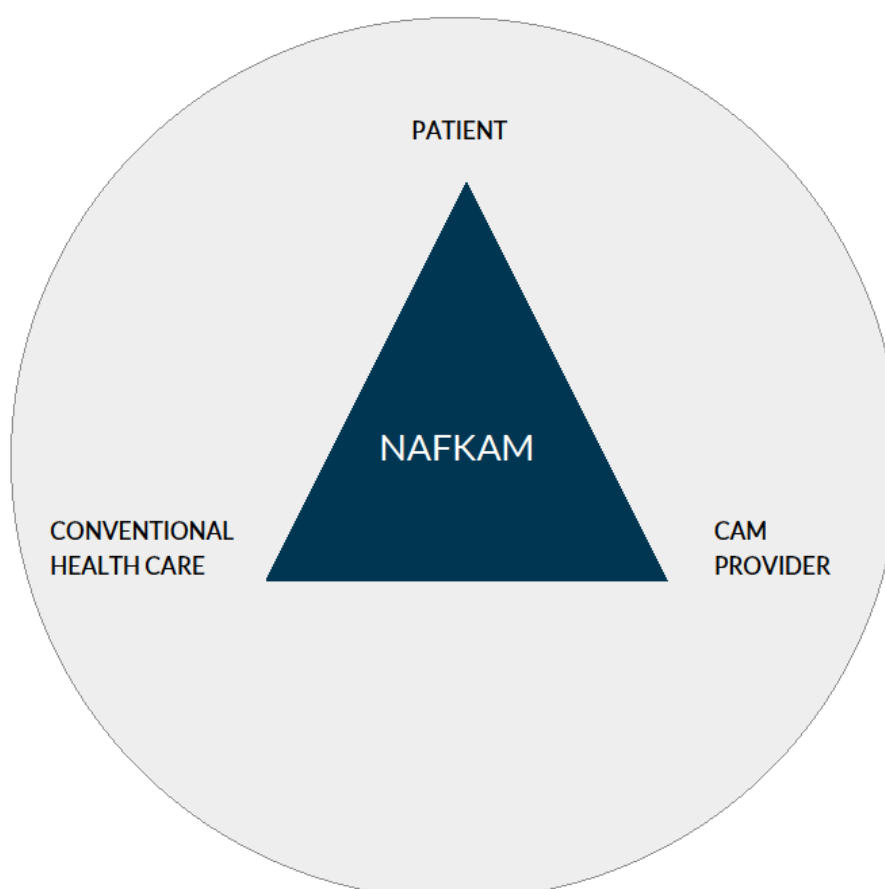


Figure 2 User involvement of patients, CAM providers and conventional health care providers.

© NAFKAM

PPI and CCI is established in all phases, i.e. in the design of studies and projects, in undertaking study and project activities, in the dissemination and implementation of the results, and in the evaluation process once the study or project is completed. NAFKAM aims to a greater extent to initiate and perform relevant studies in collaboration with hospitals and other health care services within Norway.

PPI and CCI are essential to assure that NAFKAM's research and information services are of use and furthermore are being used by a wider audience.

NAFKAM's guiding principles for PPI and CCI are:

- Contribute to safe patient care in Norwegian health services
- Activities are guided by those that use CAM and based on their needs
- Knowledge and awareness of the patient journey
- Knowledge and awareness of culturally sensitive research
- Identification and evaluation of patient-centered and patient-reported outcomes
- Knowledge and experience of CAM providers
- Knowledge and experience of conventional health care providers



*Photo 1 Illustrative example of PPI and CCI involvement in NAFKAM's projects.  
Photo: Joshua Bright (www.joshuabright.com)*

Assessing Feasibility and Impact of Wilderness Therapy on Mental and Physical Health of Adolescent and Young Adult Cancer Survivors. *In this feasibility study, employees and members (young cancer survivors) of Ung Cancer are actively involved in the design of the study, development of the intervention, interpretation of study results and dissemination of results. Wilderness therapists associated with the Hospital of Southern Norway and the Swedish Survival Guild are involved in the development, training and running of the intervention program. Oncologists advice regarding the (medical) condition of participants in the study and monitoring of medical safety.*

## Patient safety

Another cornerstone of this strategic plan is patient safety. It is within NAFKAM's assignment to identify and report potential safety issues related to CAM use in Norway to the health authorities. Most obvious safety issues with CAM are the adverse events and drug-interactions caused by these treatments. Less obvious and often underestimated safety issues with CAM use are indirect risks related to replacement of treatment in the healthcare system or delaying appropriate medical treatment.

Patient safety will be within the focus of every study and project initiated by NAFKAM.

One important aim for the coming years is to develop a NAFKAM online registry system for consumers, patients, CAM practitioners and health care professionals to report adverse events related to the use of CAM in Norway. The strategy for the development of such a reporting system will follow several phases in which PPI and CCI is essential for conceiving, piloting, and evaluating of the reporting system before a full version of the registry will be in place.

Patient safety is also at the core of NAFKAM's activities as a Collaborative Center of the WHO. NAFKAM continues to support WHO's work on medication safety and quality of care by collecting data and reviewing WHO technical documents on safety, regulation, and training benchmarks in CAM.

NAFKAM's guiding principles for patient safety are:

- Identification and evaluation of safety-related indicators and outcome measures
- High professional and ethical standards
- Monitoring system for the identification of potential risks
- National standards and legal frameworks to improve patient safety
- To involve health care user, patient, public, CAM provider and health care professional in projects

## Objectivity

The third cornerstone of this strategic plan is objectivity. NAFKAM has the task to provide and present information in an accurate and balanced way. Polarized viewpoints continue to dominate the public debate over CAM in Norway. It is therefore of high importance that NAFKAM facilitates constructive dialogue to support informed decision making.

NAFKAM maintains an unbiased position based on rigorous and objective evaluations adhering to high scientific research standards.

NAFKAM operates independently of any commercial or personal interest and will only accept funding that does not compromise the center's ability to address issues freely, thoroughly, and objectively.

NAFKAMs guiding principles for objectivity are:

- To take the needs and interests of its stakeholders into account
- Information and assessments are based on facts and research
- Independence (no conflict of interest)
- Procedures and criteria for inclusion of information
- Appropriate citing and referring to sources

## Transparency

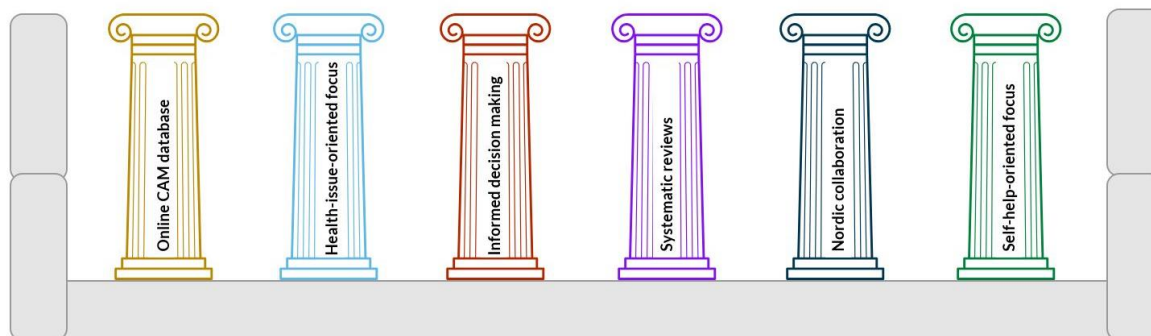
Transparency is the fourth cornerstone of NAFKAM. As a national center, NAFKAM communicates clearly about its assignment and tasks, and undertakes its activities in an open, honest, and accountable way. NAFKAM provides information about its activities to stakeholders that is accurate, reliable, complete, consistent, and made available in a timely way.

Internal and external communication at NAFKAM is characterized by an open and respectful attitude, and transparency.

NAFKAM's guiding principles for transparency are:

- Procedures and standards are publicly available on NAFKAM's website
- Compliance with Health On the Net's standards for health online information (HONcode)
- Presentation of NAFKAM's activities at national conferences
- Regular public updates on NAFKAM activities and its impact
- 'No conflict of interest' is clearly stated and published
- Authorship and date of creation of information are always listed
- Regular updating of NAFKAM's websites
- Appropriate citing and referring to sources

## NAFKAM's prioritized areas make up the six pillars of this strategic plan



From Jul 27 – Sept 28, 2020, NAFKAM performed a web-based survey among its stakeholders in Norway. The aim of this survey was to get feedback on NAFKAM's current activities and focus areas, and to collect input for NAFKAM's new strategic plan in the years to come. A total of 166 people provided their feedback by responding to the survey. They represented a broad spectrum of NAFKAM's stakeholders in the Norwegian society: CAM users, CAM providers, patient organizations, health care professional's organizations and governmental bodies. The findings from this survey<sup>1</sup>, together with the recommendations in the report from Oxford Research AS<sup>2</sup> and an internal SWOT analysis of the center and operational field, resulted in the identification and selection of six prioritized areas for NAFKAM in the years to come.

### NAFKAM's online CAM databases

NAFKAM runs [the national online CAM database NAFKAM.no](https://nafkam.no) for providing the Norwegian population with evidence-based information on the background, principles, effectiveness, and safety of 140 different CAM modalities. The need to improve navigation and usability of this online database was expressed in the survey among NAFKAM's stakeholders<sup>1</sup> (appendix 1). The content of the database is currently presented and accessible according to CAM modalities' names only. Hence, users searching for information on CAM based on a symptom, outcome, or diagnosis may be hindered in finding and making use of the content. Furthermore, the evidence of effectiveness of these CAM modalities is currently based on summaries of systematic reviews and meta-analyses of existing research. While systematic reviews provide the most compelling evidence of effectiveness, it limits NAFKAM from disseminating information on newly published studies and other levels of evidence for CAM.

<sup>2</sup> Oxford Research AS. [Fra minefelt til etablert forskningsområde. Evaluering av Nasjonalt Forskningsssenter innen Komplementær og Alternativ Medisin](#) (2014).

In the coming years NAFKAM will prioritize to further develop and improve the content of its online CAM databases.

The primary goals for NAFKAM.no are:

- To restructure the online database so that information is also searchable on the level of symptoms/outcome/health issue/diagnosis.
- To review its methodology and procedures for evidence syntheses of CAM modalities and implement them in the online database.

[NAFKAM's manual for writing and reviewing CAM Cancer summaries \(PDF\)](#) will inform the further development of NAFKAM.no. A step-by-step approach for revision of the content will be developed based on pilot testing.

NAFKAM also manages [the international CAM Cancer project](#), aimed at providing health professionals in Europe and beyond with high-quality, evidence-based information about CAM for cancer and maintaining an authoritative network of experts in the field. The project website includes an information database containing 75 summaries on CAM modalities, which are based on a rigorous assessment and evaluation of the available research. In 2020, a successful pilot was carried out to restructure the database in order to make the information accessible according to treatment outcomes in addition to CAM modalities. In the coming years, the whole CAM Cancer database will be restructured to improve navigation by treatment outcomes. Further development of CAM Cancer in the coming years will include adding specific summaries on CAM interventions for children, and safety overview tables.

## A health-issue-oriented focus

The broadness of the CAM field makes it necessary to focus NAFKAM's research and communication activities. Within the next five years, NAFKAM will focus on use and safety of CAM for health issues that are particularly common. This includes health issues that have a high impact on the quality of life of the individual such as cancer, chronic pain, and mental health problems. Although there is a necessity to focus, NAFKAM will continue to initiate activities in other areas that are actual and urgent. In the coming years NAFKAM will continue to investigate and publish on the role and use of CAM during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, NAFKAM aims to investigate the use of traditional and complementary medicine by migrants in Norway.

Within these areas, a multimethod research approach will be applied that involves cross-sectional surveys, qualitative studies, observational studies, mixed-methods studies, and randomized controlled trials. The concepts of PPI and CCI are established in all these study types where possible.

Where possible and of added value/benefit, newly initiated studies at NAFKAM will be embedded within an international collaboration with relevant universities and researchers.

## Informed decision making

People should always be encouraged and able to discuss CAM use with their physician and other conventional health care personnel. However, in practice many individuals are still using CAM without informing use thereof to health care professionals. Physicians and other authorized health care professionals often have little or no knowledge about CAM, and therefore find themselves unable to discuss the possible risks and benefits of CAM with their patients.

CAM practices and products are thus in use, even though they are not monitored for safety. This involves possible risks, and possibly even more so for vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly. Appropriate communication tools to assist safe and informed decision-making on CAM use by individuals, caretakers and health care professionals are thus needed.

Where do CAM users find their information, at which stage and for what purpose do they use CAM, and what kind of communication tools are appropriate and useful in the dialogue with their health care professionals? In the coming years NAFKAM aims to gain more insight in the dialogue between health care professionals and individuals on CAM use and the decision-making process of CAM users.

Practically, communication tools will be developed with active PPI and CCI involvement and according to the existing guidelines and established standards. It is of importance to first identify the most relevant outcomes/therapies for which these tools should be developed.

Subsequently, different tools and channels of dissemination will be piloted that build on existing tools. The content of communication tools will be based on the four principles of evidence-based information: research-based information; health professionals' expertise; individuals' and families' goals and values; and contextual factors. Aids and tools to assist informed choices requires that users are informed about all available choices with pros/cons in an understandable language.



*Photo 2 Illustrative example of a NAFKAM project on informed decision making.  
Photo: Mostphotos.com*

Development of an Evidence-Based Decision Aid on CAM for Parents of Children with Cancer. *This project aims to develop, implement, and evaluate an evidence-based decision aid on CAM use for cancer-treatment related side effects (e.g. nausea/vomiting) in children. The decision aid will be developed for parents of children with cancer and health care professionals in order to make well-informed, individual decisions concerning CAM. PPI is established through collaboration with the Norwegian Children's Cancer Society.*

## Systematic reviews

One of the recommendations in the Oxford Research AS report<sup>2</sup> was that NAFKAM, as a national competence center in CAM, should prioritize performing systematic reviews on CAM. NAFKAM will build on the review competences and international collaborations that it has developed during the past years in this area. Furthermore, NAFKAM staff will receive training to further develop systematic review skills.

NAFKAM will perform systematic reviews to:

- Investigate the prevalence of CAM use.
- Investigate the safety of CAM.
- Summarize the evidence for effectiveness on CAM.
- Identify the (research) gaps in literature for CAM.
- Gain understanding of perceptions, experiences, and certain phenomenon regarding CAM use.

Practically, conducting reviews and reporting of results will be performed by established guidelines. Performing systematic reviews will include a librarian who can provide support with searching the specific databases, and PPI and CCI where possible. Protocols for systematic reviews will be published or registered in PROSPERO.

NAFKAM's website will include a separate page that gives an overview of the systematic reviews that are published or are in progress at NAFKAM.

## Strengthening the Nordic collaboration

NAFKAM's focus in the next five years will be to enhance its activities and visibility in Norway. Initiating new and maintaining ongoing international collaborations will therefore primarily serve to support and strengthen NAFKAM's national activities. Concerning the latter, NAFKAM sees the need to strengthen collaborative activities within the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, and Sweden. The conventional healthcare systems and CAM regulations are very similar in the Nordic countries. Strengthening the Nordic collaboration will create opportunities for NAFKAM to collaborate in (clinical) studies and the further development of the online CAM databases.

Currently, NAFKAM is the only national research and information center on CAM in the Nordic countries. Although the Danish information center on CAM<sup>3</sup> was closed in 2013, there continues to be a high need and interest among patient organizations and political parties in Denmark for a national knowledge center on CAM and collaboration with NAFKAM therein<sup>4</sup>.

In Finland there seems to be little academic research to investigate the safety and effectiveness of CAM<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, in 2014 the Finnish Forum for Research in Integrative Medicine and Healthcare (SILF) was established to provide information and facilitate seminars on research in the field of CAM and Integrative Medicine<sup>6</sup>.

In Iceland, the need and interest for research and information on CAM is mostly apparent among nurses<sup>7</sup>.

In 2017, the Swedish government assigned a commission to map and submit proposals regarding the use of CAM in relation to patient safety and care in Sweden. In 2019, the commission recommended among others that Swedish citizens should be provided with information on CAM in order to make well-informed choices and they proposed several ways to improve the public's access to independent information on CAM<sup>8</sup>.

The apparent need for and interest in independent research and information on CAM in the other Nordic countries thus creates possibilities for a more intensive collaboration between the countries and with NAFKAM.

---

<sup>3</sup> Salomonsen, L.J., Skovgaard, L., la Cour, S. et al. Use of complementary and alternative medicine at Norwegian and Danish hospitals. *BMC Complement Altern Med*: 11(4) (2011).

<sup>4</sup> Bak Thorup, S. Lukkede for otte år siden: Nordmænd positive over for at genoplive dansk videnscenter om alternativ behandling. *Sundhedsmonitor*: 20 November (2020).

<sup>5</sup> Zimmermann PJ, Aarva P, Sorsa M: The Situation of Complementary and Alternative Medicine / Integrative Medicine in Finland: Genuine Research Is Needed. *Complement Med Res*: 24(5) (2017).

<sup>6</sup> The Finnish Forum for Research in Integrative Medicine and Healthcare ([http://www.integrative-medicine.fi/EN/index\\_EN.html](http://www.integrative-medicine.fi/EN/index_EN.html)).

<sup>7</sup> Integrative Nursing (1 edn) Edited by Mary Jo Kreitzer and Mary Koithan. Integrative Nursing in Iceland: Gisli Kristofersson and Thora Jenny Gunnarsdottir (2014).

<sup>8</sup> Asplund, K. Komplementär och alternativ medicin och vård – säkerhet, kunskap, dialog. SOU: 15 (2019).

The first aim is to create a separate webpage on the NAFKAM website that gives an overview of former and current ongoing Nordic collaboration projects. For example, NAFKAM recently initiated and performed an international cross-sectional survey with Sweden to investigate the use of CAM for prevention and treatment of COVID-19 related symptoms.

Within the next years, NAFKAM aims to initiate collaborative projects with universities, researchers, and organizations in the Nordic countries. Not only related to research, but also related to further development of the online CAM database and other (communication) projects. External funding for such collaborative studies and projects will be sought. NAFKAM will furthermore actively participate in the Swedish Integrative Oncology Forum, a yearly two-day invitational conference organized by the Swedish Cancer Academy North in collaboration with the Regional Cancer Center Stockholm/Gotland.

### A self-help-oriented focus

The percentage of Norwegian citizens that use CAM as self-help, such as herbs, meditation and yoga to improve their health, are nowadays higher than those visiting a CAM provider/practitioner<sup>9</sup>. Many CAM users search for CAM information on the internet and buy CAM products and services online<sup>10</sup>. The influence of social media in promoting online sales of CAM treatments is considered to be high.

Furthermore, when searching for health information online, people often encounter predatory websites that market health products and strategies with no proven effectiveness<sup>10</sup>. Monitoring the effectiveness of self-use of CAM and the possible risks that are associated with this self-use as to ensure patient safety is a major challenge.

In the coming years, NAFKAM will extend the focus from practitioner provided interventions to effectiveness and safety of self-help-strategies. NAFKAM will focus on implementation of new strategies to identify, monitor, and reduce the occurrence of adverse events associated with self-use of CAM. This includes the development of an online registry system for the reporting of adverse events associated with CAM use.

Other strategies will be to encourage health care providers to ask about CAM-use when treating patients and to develop and evaluate aids/tools that enable people to make informed and safe choices. It is also of high importance to continue informing and educating the public about potential adverse events and drug interactions associated with CAM use, to provide them with reliable sources of information and to communicate that self-use of CAM should never replace the consultation with health professionals.

A broad range of communication instruments will be used as to reach out to those that use CAM as self-medication, including communication via social media, pod casts and organized

---

<sup>9</sup> NAFKAM Rapport: Bruk av alternativ behandling i Norge (2018).

<sup>10</sup> Sharma V, Holmes JH, Sarkar IN. Identifying Complementary and Alternative Medicine Usage Information from Internet Resources. A Systematic Review. *Methods Inf Med*: 55(4) (2016).

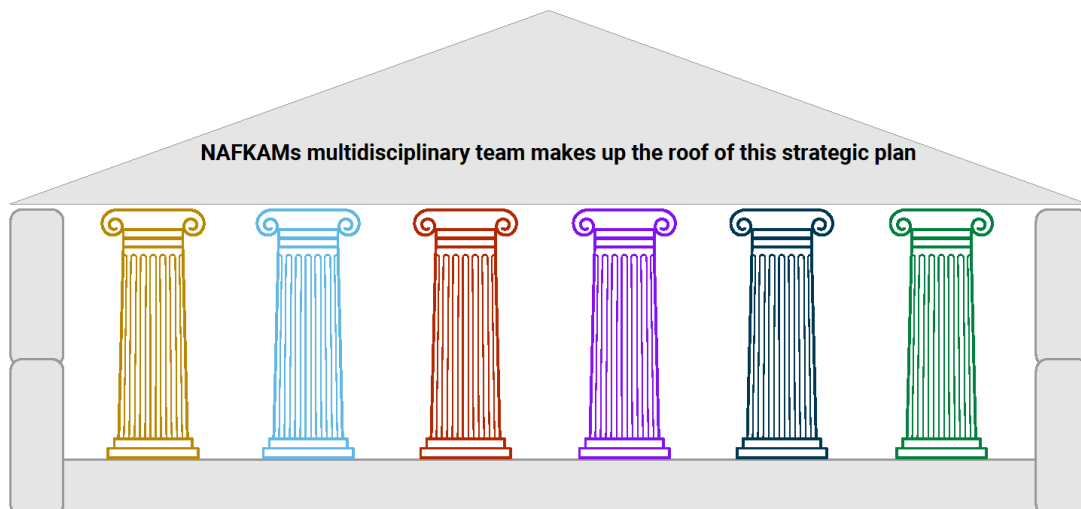
educational meetings in close collaboration with patient and other public organizations in Norway.



Photo 3 Illustrative example of an education meeting co-organized by NAFKAM on self-use of CAM.  
Photo: Kreftforeningen

*Cancer and the diet. The aim of this project was to educate cancer survivors about diet as supportive care and alleged cure for cancer. In open meetings, myths about diet and cancer were discussed, as well as possible risks and health benefits of using different diets, foods, nutrients, and supplements, during or after cancer treatment. A guide for health care professionals was developed by means of two digital toolboxes, one on cancer and diet and one on communication with patients about CAM. This project was a collaboration between the Norwegian Cancer Society and NAFKAM. A follow-up project on this topic is planned in the years to come.*

**NAFKAM's multidisciplinary team makes up the roof of this strategic plan**



NAFKAM's most important resource is its staff. In the past, employees working with information about CAM were working as a separate unit, NIFAB, which merged with NAFKAM in 2018. Currently, NAFKAM operates in two separate teams. The information/communication team mainly deals with all dissemination of information on CAM. The research team performs studies to investigate the effectiveness and safety of CAM and acts externally as CAM experts based on their scientific competence.

Future activities will be performed by a multidisciplinary team at NAFKAM to create more synergy. NAFKAM staff will have good understanding and mutual respect of each other's roles and competences in planned and ongoing projects. The different roles of NAFKAM staff within the multidisciplinary team will be outlined and further described in standard operating procedures and the UiT personal cards.

## Impact evaluation of NAFKAM

The strategic plan 2021-2025 will guide NAFKAM in its yearly and daily activities. Each year, a NAFKAM working plan will be developed that describes in more detail the specific aims, activities, and milestones for each of the six prioritized areas as outlined in this strategic plan. Employee task agreement and performance reviews will be carried out twice a year among NAFKAM staff, so that strategic aims are translated to individual tasks and targets.

NAFKAM will develop a set of indicators to evaluate and communicate NAFKAM's impact. These indicators will be measured every quarter of the year and published on NAFKAM's website. Indicators may include among others:

- User statistics of NAFKAM's website and other information/communication and decision tools
- User satisfaction with NAFKAM's products and services
- Percentage of PPI and CCI in projects
- Number of citations in media/press and scientific literature
- Number of scientific publications and other publications within national and international collaborations
- Citation of NAFKAM's reviews
- Number of PhD dissertations
- Amount of obtained external funding

## Attachments

[Appendix 1: NAFKAM's survey among stakeholders](#)