

## **Interaction of Conventional, Complementary, and Alternative Health Care**

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This article reviews issues of safety in health care, applied particularly to the interface between conventional medicine and complementary and alternative medicine. These issues include errors in treatment and medical management, adverse effects of pharmaceuticals, and defining risk for patients. For complementary and alternative medicine, especially dietary supplements, problems of quality control, licensing, regulation, and misrepresentation are discussed. An important issue is the interface between conventional and complementary therapies, in terms of drug/herb interactions, laboratory diagnosis, and lack of communication between clinicians about patients. Improvements in safety and quality will come from a commitment to better education and understanding between both types of care.

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