In this systematic review we aimed to summarize surveys investigating the use of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) methods in the general German population and by physicians and lay practitioners. Nationwide surveys (using random, panel, or quota sampling methods) published since 1993 investigating the CAM use among the population and healthcare providers in Germany were identified through searches in PubMed, Google Scholar, Google, citation screening, and expert contacts. In addition we collected publicly available data from official nationwide health statistics and market statistics. 16 surveys of the general adult population and 4 surveys among physicians met inclusion criteria. The use of CAM among general population in the previous years varied between 40 and 62%. General practitioners and orthopedic specialists in private practice seem to provide CAM therapies widely and more frequently than other physician groups, with herbal medicine and chirotherapy being the most frequently used treatments. We could not identify any surveys of lay practitioners. The available surveys provide clear evidence of the widespread use of CAM methods in Germany both by the general population and by physicians. In recent years the use of CAM methods does not seem to increase any longer; for some methods
(particularly herbal remedies) the use seems to be declining.

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