

Information-seeking behavior in complementary and alternative medicine (CAM): an online survey of faculty at a health sciences campus

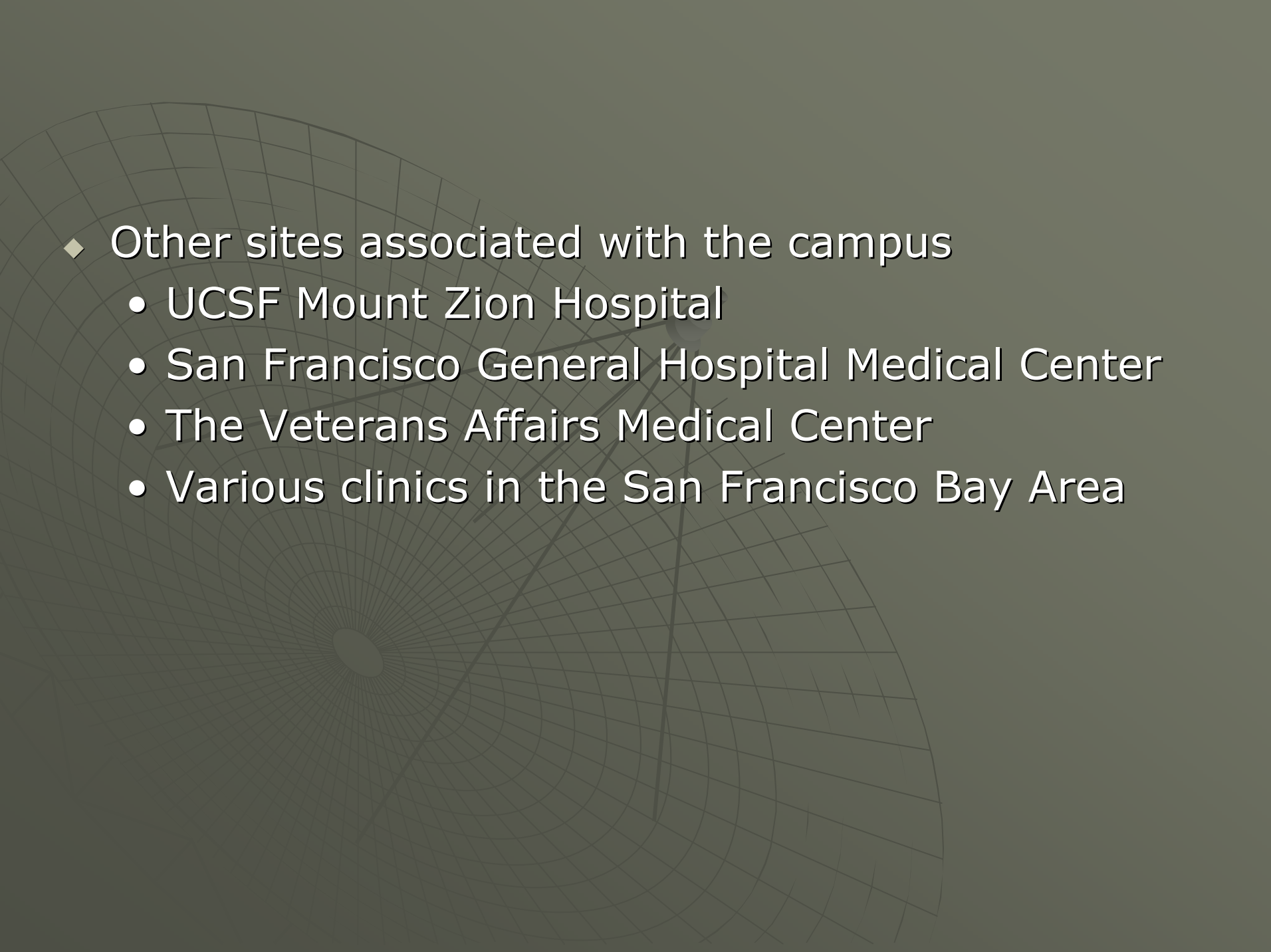
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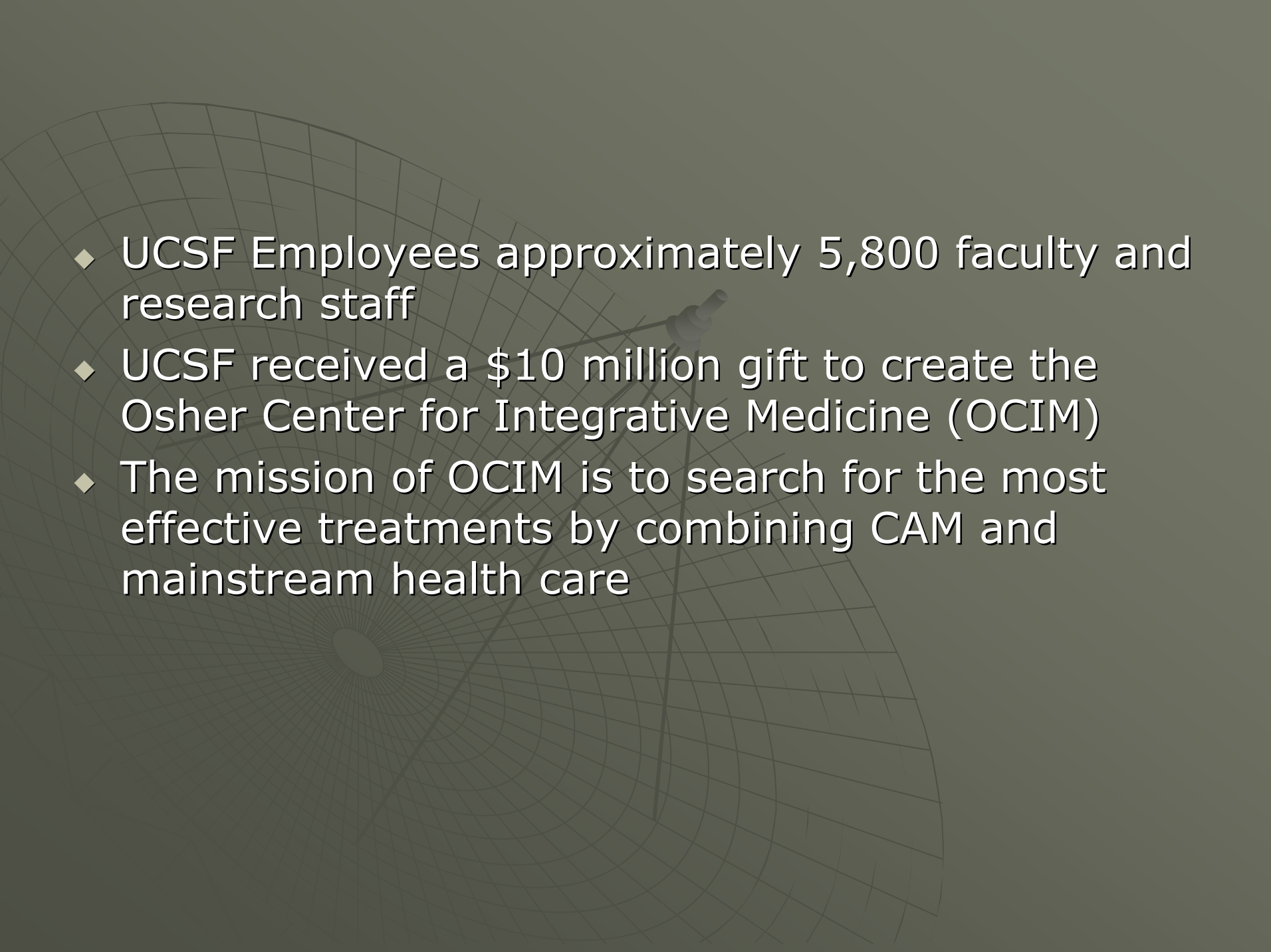
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Information Services Librarian

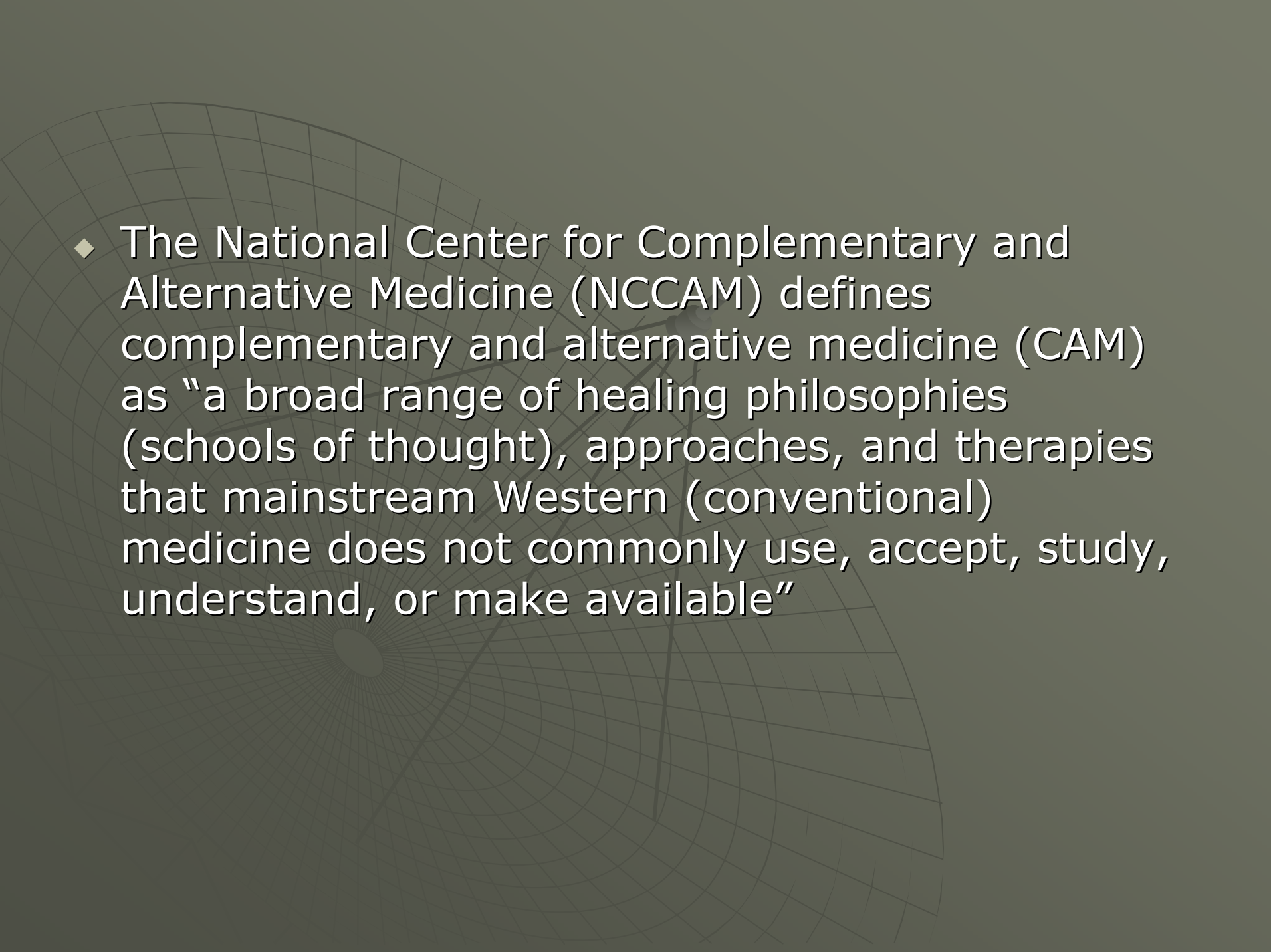
Kalmanovitz Library and Center for Knowledge
Management

University of California, San Francisco

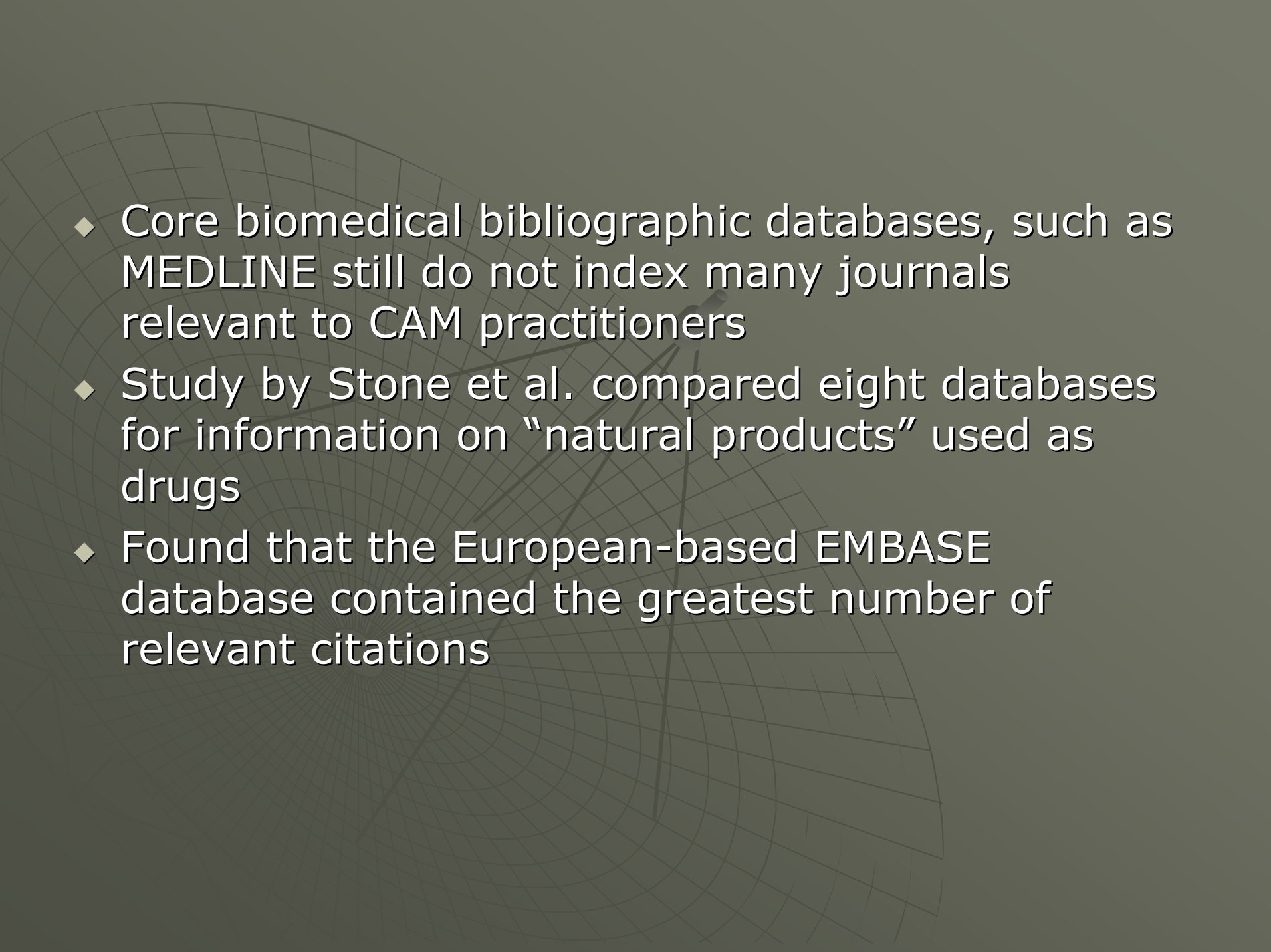
- ◆ Survey conducted at University of California, San Francisco
- ◆ Campus is dedicated to graduate and professional studies in Health Sciences
- ◆ The campus includes
 - Four professional schools:
 - ◆ Dentistry
 - ◆ Medicine
 - ◆ Nursing
 - ◆ Pharmacy
 - A graduate division for predoctoral and postdoctoral scientists
 - The UCSF Medical Center
 - The Langley Porter Psychiatric Institute

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- ◆ Other sites associated with the campus
 - UCSF Mount Zion Hospital
 - San Francisco General Hospital Medical Center
 - The Veterans Affairs Medical Center
 - Various clinics in the San Francisco Bay Area

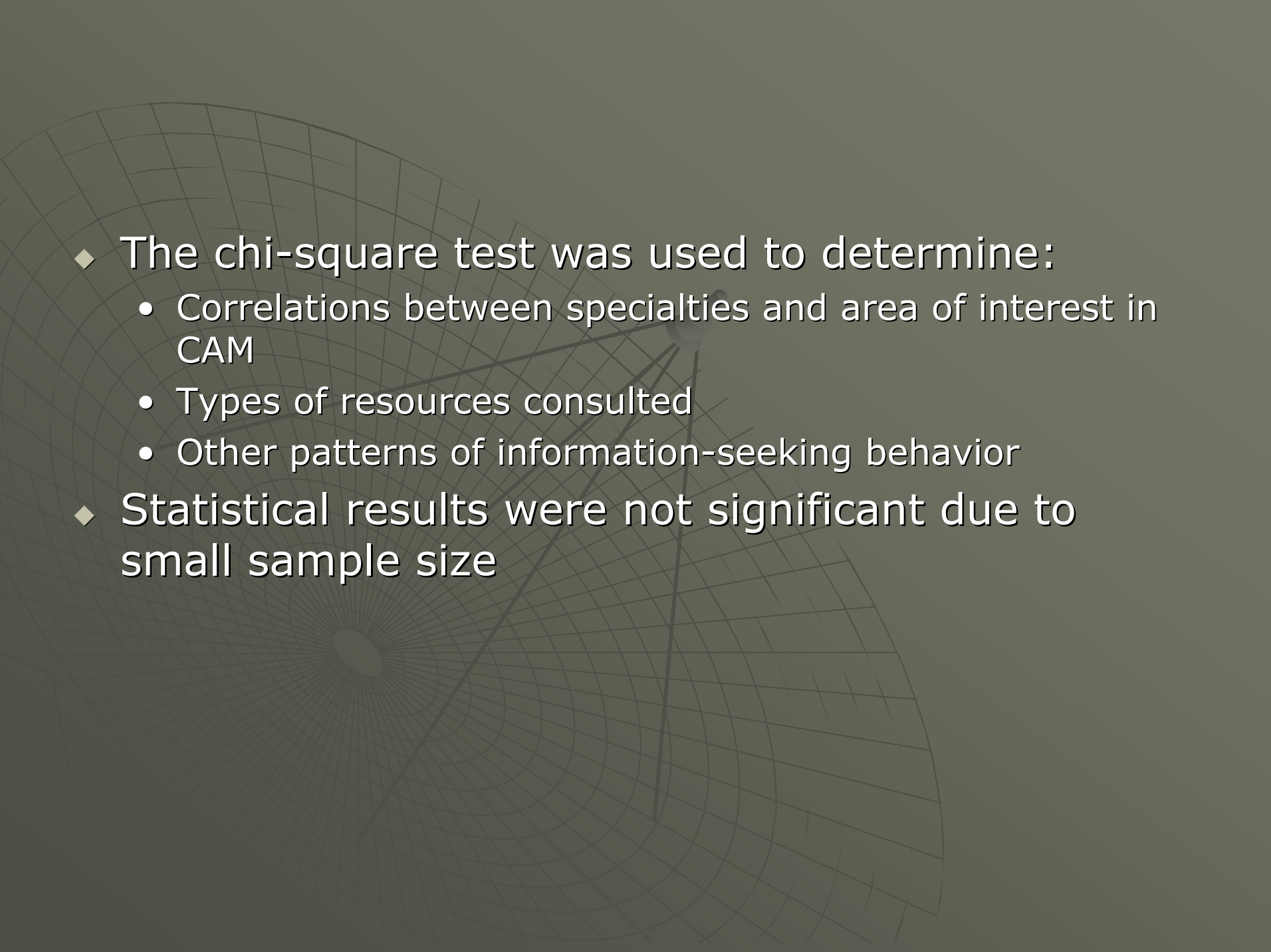
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- ◆ UCSF Employees approximately 5,800 faculty and research staff
 - ◆ UCSF received a \$10 million gift to create the Osher Center for Integrative Medicine (OCIM)
 - ◆ The mission of OCIM is to search for the most effective treatments by combining CAM and mainstream health care

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- ◆ The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) defines complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) as “a broad range of healing philosophies (schools of thought), approaches, and therapies that mainstream Western (conventional) medicine does not commonly use, accept, study, understand, or make available”

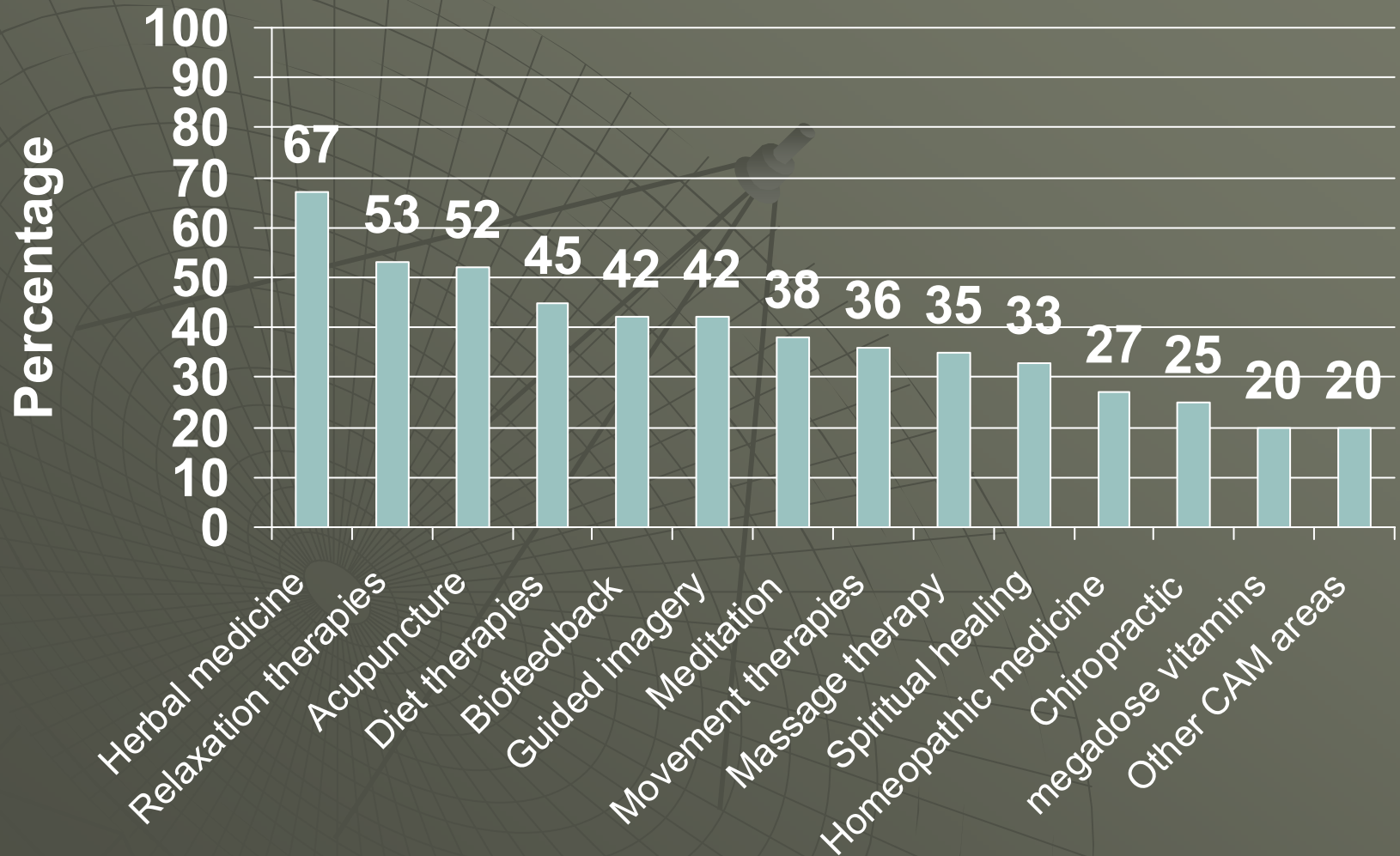
- ◆ Includes:
 - Acupuncture
 - Herbal medicine
 - Homeopathy
 - Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)
 - Host of other practices
- ◆ Studies indicate that four out of every ten Americans use alternative therapies, and more visits are made to alternative medical practitioners than primary care physicians
- ◆ The current dominant biomedical-based system is being replaced by “medical pluralism”, in which people use therapies and practices from a variety of healing systems

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- ◆ Core biomedical bibliographic databases, such as MEDLINE still do not index many journals relevant to CAM practitioners
 - ◆ Study by Stone et al. compared eight databases for information on “natural products” used as drugs
 - ◆ Found that the European-based EMBASE database contained the greatest number of relevant citations

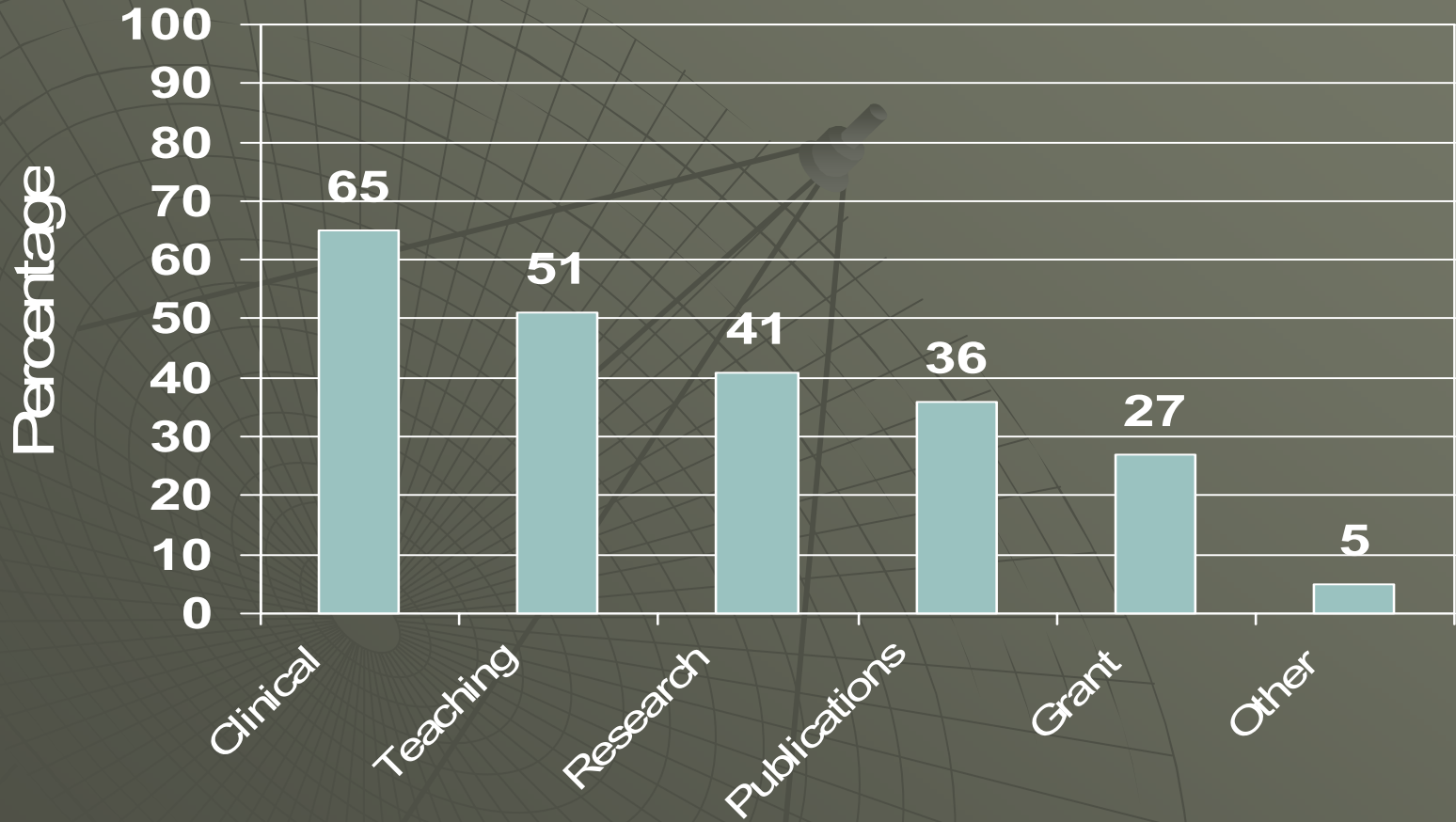
- ◆ A survey was conducted using a questionnaire, with thirteen questions and sections for the individuals to provide additional information
- ◆ E-mail was sent to 295 UCSF clinic and research faculty who had previously identified themselves as interested in CAM
- ◆ The questionnaire could be filled out anonymously either on the web or by returning the attached Word document
- ◆ Results were analyzed using SPSS 10 for Windows
- ◆ Frequency tables and means were used to describe the data

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- ◆ The chi-square test was used to determine:
 - Correlations between specialties and area of interest in CAM
 - Types of resources consulted
 - Other patterns of information-seeking behavior
 - ◆ Statistical results were not significant due to small sample size

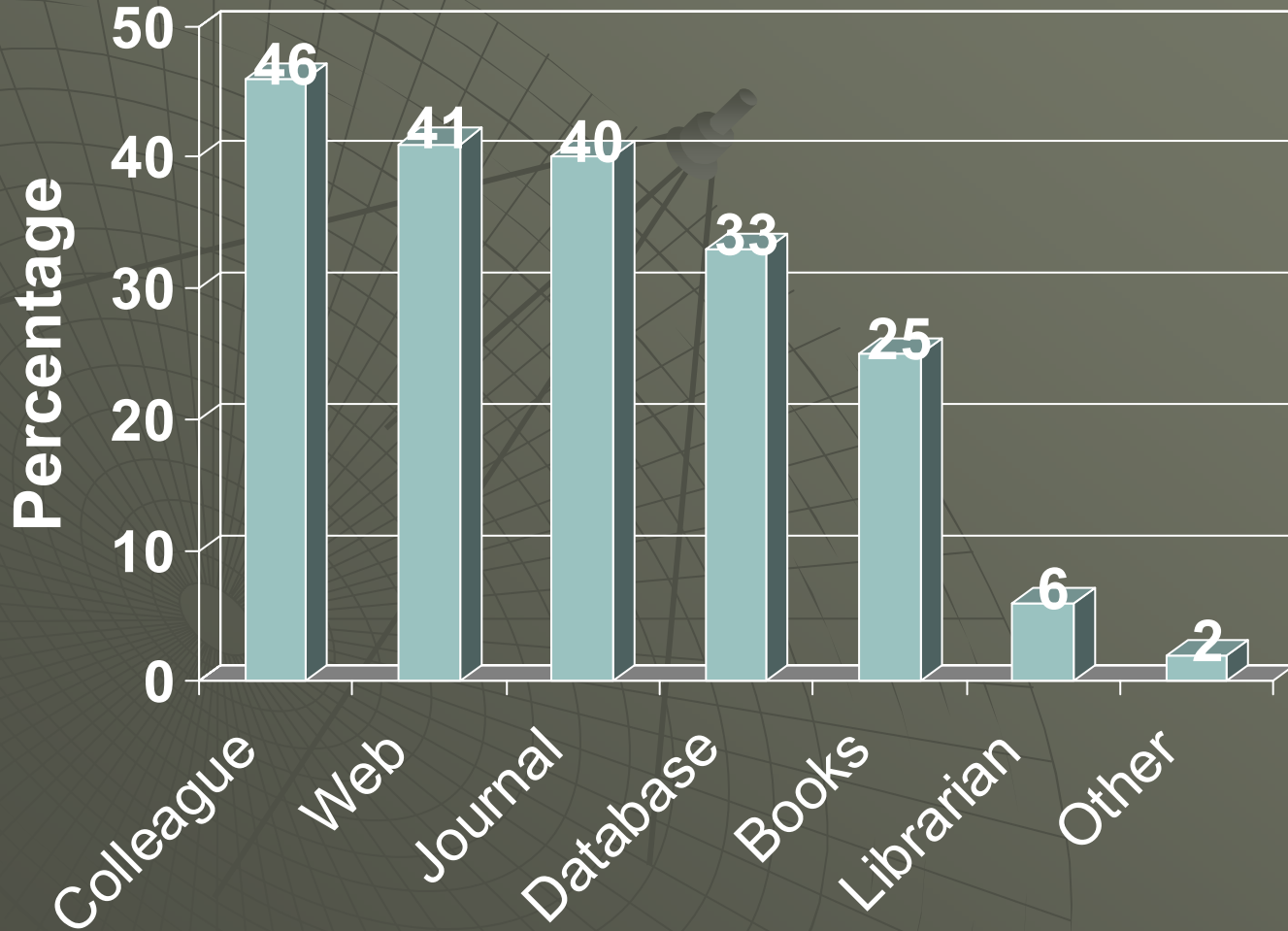
Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) areas of interest (N=121)

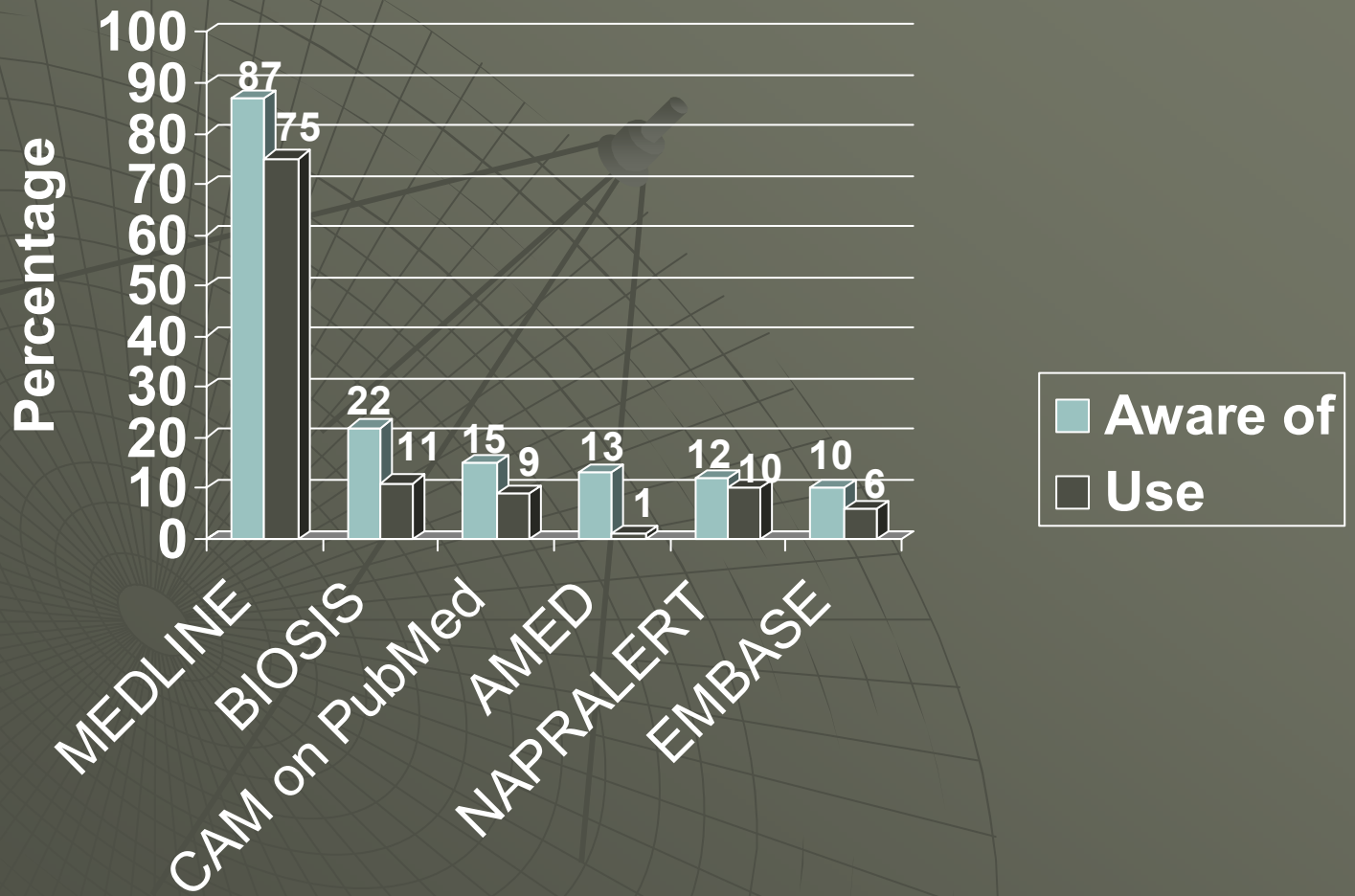


Use of CAM Information (N =121)

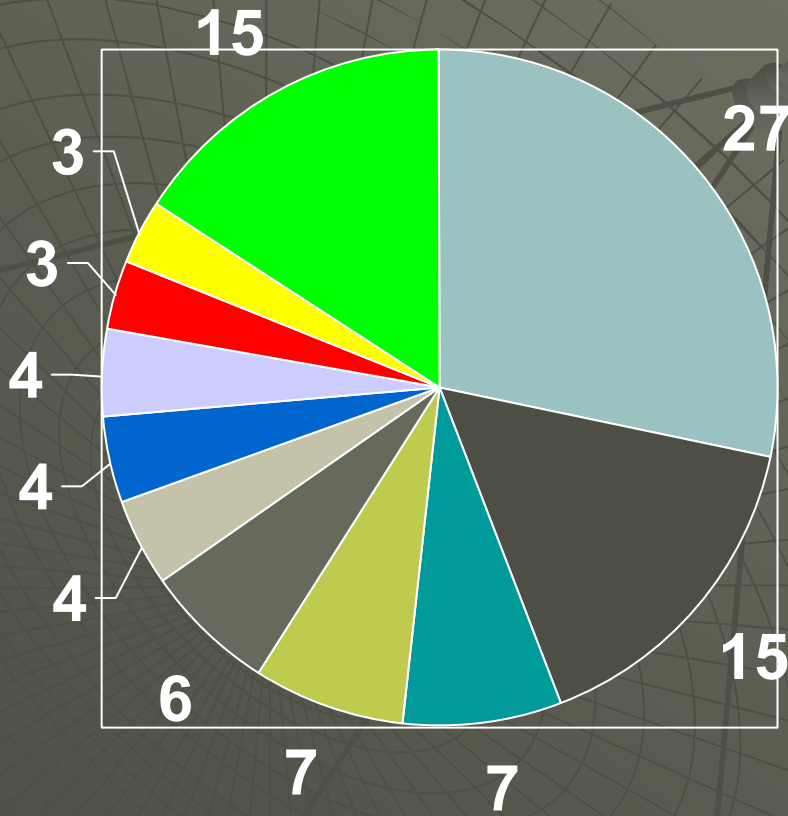


Sources of CAM Information (N = 121)





Specialty (N =121)



- Internal Medicine
- Psychiatry/behavioral medicine/addiction medicine
- Family practice
- Pediatrics
- Research
- Dentistry
- Neurology
- Pharmacy
- Nursing
- Pathology
- Other

- ◆ Results showed that health professionals at UCSF frequently did not find the CAM information they sought
- ◆ Majority of survey respondents were unfamiliar with several important CAM resources
- ◆ There is an absence of core printed books in the area of CAM
- ◆ Journals are often the primary source used for clinical information
- ◆ Mainstream US medical journals are still regarded as being poor CAM sources
- ◆ Personal communications seems to be of greater importance than textbooks or journals, when seeking CAM information

- ◆ 41% of respondents reported using the web as a source for CAM information
- ◆ Large variation of the quality of health information on the web, with much of it being unverified
- ◆ Area of greatest interest was herbal medicine
- ◆ Academic health sciences librarians need to become aware of new developments in CAM therapies and treatments
- ◆ Due to results of this research, UCSF introduced a class on the topic in the library's informatics program



Discussion