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Sommario/riassunto	Walk into the local health food shop or pick up today's paper and the chances are that you'll see adverts for acupuncture and herbal medicine, hypnotists and homeopaths. Some doctors and scientists mourn the lost lustre of mainstream medicine and complain about a new breed of 'irrational' consumer. But what exactly is 'alternative' medicine? Is the astonishing popularity of alternative and multicultural medicine really such a recent development? And, given the success story of modern biomedical science, why are alternative and traditional treatments now so fashionable? Has the impersonal chill