Optimal Health:
Integration of TCM with Conventional Medical Treatments

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Pros of TCM

• History goes back 4000 to 5000 years
• Yellow Emperor 黃帝, reigned from 2697 to 2597 BCE.
• Yellow Emperor’s Inner Classic 黃帝內經, created between late Warring States Period (475-221 BCE) and early Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE).
Pros of TCM

• Shen Nung, the Divine Husbandman 神農, legendary emperor around 2800 BCE.
• *Divine Husbandman’s Materia Medica*, 神農本草經, compiled between 300 BCE to 200CE, 365 herbs listed.
Pros of TCM

• A large number of herbs and herbal formulations with known efficacy and safety profile.
• *Grand Materia Medica* 本草綱目, compiled by Li Shi Zhen 李時珍 (1518-1593) in Ming Dynasty (1363-1644), describes properties and applications of over 1800 herbs
Pros of TCM

• Tremendous person-year clinical knowledge and experience
• The most revered TCM doctor, Zhang Zhong Jing 張仲景 (150-219) of Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE), wrote two most influential TCM texts:
  • Treatise on Cold-induced and Febrile Diseases, 112 formulations for cold, infectious diseases and related disorders.
  • Synopsis of Prescriptions of the Golden Chamber, 269 formulations for a variety of problems encountered in internal medicine.
Pros of TCM

EXPLICIT RECOGNITION OF CAUSE OF DISEASE

• 6 external causes: wind, cold, heat, damp, dryness, summer heat.
• 2 types of internal causes:
  i. 7 emotions: (unrestrained) happiness, anger, anxiety, pensiveness, grief, fear, fright.
Pros of TCM

ii. Endogenous disorder: improper diet, excessive physical challenge.

- Other causes: injuries.

- Individualized diagnosis.

- 4 methods of diagnosis: taking medical data, smell and sound, visual inspection, pulse diagnosis.
Pros of TCM

• Pulse diagnosis is like fingerprinting as it uniquely identifies an individual.
• Energy flows in meridians or channels.
• 3 positions on each arm corresponding to 5 major organ systems, namely: heart, liver, digestive system, lung, kidney, and vital gate.
Pros of TCM

• 27 patterns reflecting either inherent or abnormal energies.
• Multiple patterns can overlap.
• Stagnation of energy, phlegm formation, and blood stasis are major sources of obstruction to a normal pattern of meridian flow.
Pros of TCM

HERBAL FORMULATION AFTER DIAGNOSIS

• Identify a person’s diagnostic type according to 8 principles of diagnosis: interior/exterior (problem), cold/hot (nature), weak/strong (constitution), yin/yang (problem).

• Invoke the principle of the 5 elements: wood, fire, earth, metal, water.
Pros of TCM

• Assign herbs according to 5 tastes: sour (liver), bitter (heart), sweet (digestive system), spicy (lung), salty (kidney).

• Assign herbs according to 5 colors: green (liver), red (heart), yellow (digestive system), white (lung), black (kidney).

• Identify characteristics of herbs: affinity, texture, cooling/warming.
Pros of TCM

FOODS AND NUTRITION AS THERAPY

• Between Western Zhou Dynasty (1029-771 BCE) and Warring States period (475-221 BCE).
• *Rites of Zhou* 周禮: 以五味, 五谷, 五藥養其病 use 5 tastes, 5 crops, 5 herbal medicaments to manage the disease.
Pros of TCM

• *Thousand Golden Prescriptions* 千金方 by Sun Si Miao 孫思邈 (581-673) in Tang Dynasty (618-907). First publication on foods as therapy.
• 醫食同源, 藥膳同源 Medicine and food come from the same source.
Cons of TCM

• Diagnosis and treatment subjective.
• Energy medicine difficult to assess by scientific means.
• Difficult to obtain some herbs and herbs with good quality.
• Contamination. Heavy metals, adulteration with Western medicine ingredients. Avoid processed herbal products except from a reputable company. Tong Ren Tang 同仁堂 in Beijing.
Cons of TCM

• Progress can be slow. Expect steady and cumulative improvement. More suitable to management of chronic diseases.
• Taste and stomach issues.
• Compliance issues: suboptimal dose schedule, self medication.
• Cost factor: $200+ per month for common health conditions, $500+ for cancer.
Prevention of Chronic Diseases

- Concept of “treat the disease that has not occurred yet 治未病” discussed since Song Dynasty (960-1279).
- Cardiovascular diseases. Fundamental theories regarding energy stagnation, phlegm, and blood stasis are directly relevant.
- Diabetes. Attributable to an imbalance in kidney meridian energy and spleen meridian energy.
Prevention of Chronic Diseases

- Cataract formation. Attributable to a decrease in kidney meridian energy.
- Osteoporosis. Attributable to a decrease in kidney meridian energy.
- Age-related dementia. Promote energy flow and blood flow to the brain.
Cancer Prevention

- Both primary and secondary prevention.
- Fundamental philosophy from *Inner Classic*: When positive energy is guarding inside, evil elements cannot do their job.

正氣內存，邪不可干.
Cancer Prevention

BREAST CANCER

• Women at increased risk due to personal history or family history.

• Zhu Dan Xi 朱丹溪 (1281-1358) in Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) attributed the main cause of breast cancer to emotional stress.

• Estrogen responsive breast cancer (ER+), secondary prevention uses tamoxifen for pre-menopausal women and an aromatase inhibitor for post-menopausal women.
Cancer Prevention

• Both tamoxifen and aromatase inhibitors are associated with potentially severe long-term side effects.

• Endogenous estrogen estradiol (E2) is promotive, estrone (E1) and estriol (E3) are not.

• Main estrogen metabolites 2-hydroxyestrone (2-OH1) is protective, while 16a-hydroxyestrone (16a-OH1) is damaging. Ratio 2-OH1/16a-OH1 is a biomarker for breast cancer risk.
Cancer Prevention

• Our team at Strang Cancer Prevention Center (closed in 2008) has shown Lycium barbarum (goji berry 枸子) up-regulates 2-OH1/16a-OH1 and detoxifies E2 into E3. Nutrition and Cancer 2009.

• Our team has shown similar results with Cornus officinalis (cornus 山茱萸). Molecular medicine Reports 2011.

• My website georgeycwong.com.
Cancer Prevention

- Tze-Chen Hsieh et al in *International Journal of Oncology* 2002 have shown an herbal product consisting of *Epimedium grandiflorum* (淫羊藿), *Morianda officinalis* (巴戟天), *Rosa laevigata* (金樱子), *Rubus chingii* (覆盆子), *Psoralea corylifolia* (破故子), *Cuscuta chinensis* (菟丝子), and *Astragalus membranaceus* (黄芪) inhibits both androgen dependent and androgen independent prostate cancer.
Treatment of Chronic Diseases

- TCM can integrate with Western medicine to reduce medication requirements and to minimize side effects.
- Cardiovascular diseases.
- Diabetes and its associated complications.
- Viral hepatitis.
- Lung ailments: asthma, cold, bronchitis, COPD, pneumonia.
Treatment of Chronic Diseases

• Digestive issues: GERD, acid reflux, constipation, IBS, colitis, candida.
• Mental issues: anxiety, depression, manic behavior.
• Women’s health concerns: hormonal imbalance, peri-menopausal and post-menopausal symptoms.
• Men’s health concerns: prostate problems.
Treatment of Chronic Diseases

AUTOIMMUNE DISORDERS

- Western medicine uses immunosuppressive drugs with serious side effects.
- Balancing and tonifying the meridian energies is the essential TCM approach to restoring the immune system.
- Hashimoto’s disease, Graves’ disease.
- Lupus.
- Multiple sclerosis.
- Rheumatoid arthritis.
- Sjogren’s syndrome.
Cancer Treatment

• TCM is generally not powerful enough to bring about a remission but can slow down progression while maintaining quality of life.
• Treatment strategy involves a combined approach of attacking the cancer and helping the patient maintain a reasonable performance status. 攻補兼施.
Cancer Treatment

• Many anti-cancer herbs available with diversified pathways of action, including detoxification, anti-angiogenesis, apoptosis, cytotoxic action.

• Outcome depends heavily on the expertise of the TCM practitioner.

• Anti-cancer herbal extracts by intravenous infusion available in China.
Cancer Treatment

- Phase I US trial of an extract of coix seed extract Kanglaite Injection presented at 2003 ASCO.
- Phase II US trials of Kanglaite Injection for lung, pancreatic, and prostate cancer have started since 2011.
Cancer Treatment

• TCM best used for reduction of side effects from chemotherapy and radiation: fatigue, digestive problems, anemia, neutropenia, low platelets, dehydrating effects (radiation).
• TCM best to complement and synergize with conventional treatments: enhancement of chemo or radiation sensitivity, improvement of performance status to increase therapeutic efficacy.
Cancer Treatment

• Routine in China to integrate TCM into conventional cancer treatments.
• Researchers at Pine Street Foundation in San Anselmo, CA published, in *Integrative Cancer Therapies* 2011, a study showing that adding TCM + supplements to conventional treatment significantly improved survival in a 10-year follow-up on 193 colon cancer patients at different stages.
Cancer Treatment

• The same research team also published, in *Integrative Cancer Therapies* 2011, another study showing that adding TCM + supplements to conventional treatment significantly improved survival of stages III, IV lung cancer in a 10-year follow up on 235 lung cancer patients.
Working Together 合作

• TCM practitioner must make an effort to explain his approach to MD using scientific language. Avoid using unfamiliar TCM jargon.

• TCM practitioner must make an effort to understand the scientific nature of a client’s health problem and the Western medical treatment in order to formulate appropriate herbs and minimize adverse drug-herb interactions.

• TCM practitioner should not hesitate to offer suggestions to MD that may benefit the patient.
Working Together 合作

• MD should help TCM practitioner understand the nature of the Western medicine treatment.
• MD should try to understand the herbal approach and do research on some of the herbs.
• MD should discuss a patient’s progress with TCM practitioner on a regular basis.
• MD should be cautious about a patient’s use of TCM, but should keep an open mind.
What Should You Do?

• Follow a TCM practitioner experienced in your health condition (at least 10 years preferred).
• Follow a TCM practitioner familiar with the use of common supplements.
• Follow a TCM practitioner with an understanding of the scientific nature of your health condition and your Western medical treatment.
What Should You Do?

• Avoid a TCM practitioner who claims exceptional ability.
• You should not be persuaded by your MD not to do TCM unless he can offer you a valid reason.
• You must be your own advocate based on informed decision and define your own optimal health regimen.
Chairman Mao’s Quotation

Chinese medicine is an extraordinary storehouse of treasures. It must be rigorously explored and developed to even higher levels.

中国医药学是一个偉大的宝庫, 應當努力發掘, 加以提高.