

Chinese Medicine

Harmony, the road to health

The human body is like a miniature cosmos. For a vibrant healthy life, it is essential that it exists in harmony, not only within itself, but also with nature.

1. Harmony with nature. We live in nature and take from her the conditions vital for our existence. We are influenced, directly or indirectly, by the movements and changes in the environment, to which we are bound to have corresponding physiological or pathological responses.

2. Internal harmony of the body. According to the Chinese system of medicine, the human body is made up of tissues and organs etc. They each have their own special physiological functions. However, they are inseparable from each other in structure and are inter-related in physiology, and of certain influence upon each other in pathology. These natural relations and influences are centred around the five central "organs" and come into effect through the channels and collaterals.

The concept of harmony is central to the Chinese system of medicine. It emphasises, therefore, the analysis of all the symptoms and experiences of the patient while taking into account the age, habits, physical and emotional traits and all other aspects of the individual as a whole. Its object is the patient and the causes of disease. Its method is to draw an overall picture of the patient in order to evaluate any patterns of disharmony that may have arisen.

Its aim is to regain harmony through the bodily system itself with the assistance of the carefully composed prescriptions of Chinese medicine. It offers each patient a safe, effective alternative to the many potential dangers and side-effects of artificial chemicals which are increasingly used for every illness and which are given more and more in isolation from the patient as a whole person .

Qi, the life force to achieve harmony

Unlike western orthodox medicine which describes physiological processes in great detail, the Chinese system of medicine describes how the life force, Chi, inhabits the body, and explains why healing responses vary person to person, and from time to time. It characterises the way the Chi flows in the body, the factors(cold, wind, anger, diet, lifestyle etc.) which disrupt it, the way to diagnose these disruptions, and the way to restore an internal balance.

TCM: an alternative health care

The Chinese system of medicine which is also termed as Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) consists mainly of acupuncture and herbal medicine. Both treatments concentrate on regulating the flow of Chi in order to gain the natural internal balance of the body.

In respect of the diagnosis and treatment of illness, the knowledge and experience of the TCM practitioner is of vital importance. A thorough analysis of the patient's experiences and symptoms,

the causes, nature and location of the illness as well as the patient's physical and emotional condition must all be taken into account for successful outcome.

Acupuncture

Acupuncture works through stimulating the Chi, and therefore the body's healing responses(or auto-immune system), by the insertion of thin, fine needles at various points on the body. The actions of each point and combinations of points, and their effectiveness in treating different diseases, have been learnt through observation. In recent years these actions have been systematically refined and verified by modern scientific research methods.

Chinese herbal medicine

Chinese herbal medicine involves the use of combinations of plants and minerals and can be used in the treatment of more serious conditions. Indeed, because of its richness and variety, the spectrum of its functions is extremely wide. A very ill person such as an exhausted M.E. patient would be prescribed a combination of anti-virus herbs to fight the virus and tonic herbs to enhance the physical fitness and quality of life of the sufferer.

An eczema patient would be prescribed cool-natured herbs to expel excessive heat, anti-fungal herbs to stop itching and moisturising herbs to soften and smooth the affected skin. Even a normal healthy person might wish to obtain a dietary prescription to improve fitness, to prolong youth and to enhance life expectancy. Herbal prescriptions can also be devised to strengthen the body's immune system and to prevent disease.

The scope of acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine:

The following list of conditions commonly treated by acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine give some indication of the power and scope of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Internal diseases

Allergies	Headaches	Skin diseases
Arthritis	Hypertension	Sports injuries
Asthma	Indigestion	Stress
Back pain	Insomnia	Tennis elbow
Chest pain	Jaundice	Tension
Constipation	Kidney stones	Tinnitus
Depression	M.E.	Tiredness
Dizziness	Migraine	Urine retention
Eczema	Nervous disorders	Uro-genital infections
Gall stones	Palpitations	Varicose veins
Gastric pain	Paralysis	Post viral fatigue syndrome
Hay fever		

Infectious diseases

Bronchitis	Diarrhoea
Pneumonia	Shingles
Common cold	Hepatitis
Cough	Influenza

Women's diseases

Absence of periods	Heavy periods
Painful periods	Menopausal problems

Cystitis	Hot flushes
PMT	Discharge
Infertility	Irregular periods
Habitual miscarriage	Uterine prolapse

Men's diseases

Hernia	Impotence
Prostatitis	

Children's diseases

Asthma	Diarrhoea
Infantile paralysis	Whooping cough
Bed-wetting	Digestive upsets

Addictions

Alcohol	Food
Tobacco	Heroin
Barbiturates	Tranquillisers

Questions commonly asked:

What happens during an acupuncture treatment?

Each treatment consists of a number of fine needles, usually 8 to 20, being inserted into specific locations according to your presenting problem. These bring about changes in the body to restore health and vitality.

Can I get AIDS from acupuncture?

The acupuncture needles are always sterilised before use. To eliminate any possibility of getting AIDS, or other infectious diseases, disposable needles should be used. Such needles are used once only and then disposed of safely. ShiZhen clinic uses only disposable needles.

How is a prescription constructed by a TCM practitioner ?

Based on the overall symptoms of a patient, which includes the state of illness, the patient's sex, age, and constitution, the physician begins with the guidelines as delineated in classical texts to form a basic prescription and then adjusts the prescription to the patient by adding or removing various herbs, or manipulating the dosages of the compounds to fit the precise disharmony. Such a prescription usually contains 5~15 substances and the dosages average at 3~15 grams per herb.

Are there any types of prepared Chinese herbal medicine available?

Yes, there are many types available in the form of decoction, tablet, ointment, powders, etc. An alternative to raw herbs is concentrated herbal powders, which are mixed with warm water to make a tea like drink. The full range of herb powders is prescribed at ShuLan clinic. Also, many patent formulae which have been tried and tested over a long time are available in tablet form from Shulan clinic.



By Prof. Shulan Tang