

Transforming Healthcare:



A New Beginning

by Shoshanna Katzman, L.Ac., M.S.

Americans typically seek Chinese medicine treatments as a last resort, even though needless suffering could be spared with earlier treatment. Favorable media coverage is helping to change this through building awareness and confidence in this ancient healing paradigm. Physicians are increasingly referring patients to Chinese medicine as a complement to their medical care, which is also helping to “spread the word”. Hospitals and other major healthcare facilities are now expected to include non-pharmacological options like acupuncture and therapeutic massage during discussions with patients about pain management planning. More and more signs are pointing to integration of Eastern and Western medicine – the next step for American healthcare.

Chinese medicine is complementary to conventional medicine as it offers insight and understanding into the underlying cause of disease from an alternative vantage point. This model views pain and suffering as caused by energy that is insufficient, stuck or moving in the wrong direction. Based on ancient principles such as “Law of the

Five Elements” and “Yin Yang Theory”, primary focus is placed on physical healing through re-establishment of energetic balance. As a result, Qi (vital energy) flow becomes strong and plentiful throughout the entire body. The result is alignment and integration of mind, body and spirit which triggers energetic change from the inside, emanating outward.

Classical writings such as the Yellow Emperors Classic offer practical ways of Yang Sheng, which means “nurturing life”. Based on these writings, Chinese medicine practitioners provide guidance in life style habits to increase balance and flow of Qi, the precious force of life. Yang Shen presents insights that lead to personal transformations through helping one to access their innate healing potential. For example, daily practice of Qigong exercise for Shen (spirit) nourishment employs the breath, physical movement and mind intent to activate innate healing resources. Yang Shen provides “the way” and through practical application self-damaging behaviors are replaced with life style habits that promote health and longevity –

precisely the goal of Yang Shen.

The combination of Qigong along with acupuncture increases mental clarity, awareness, insight, will power and fortitude required for manifestation of change. Acupuncture works through activation of pain-relieving hormones and the body’s innate healing capability. It’s effective for relief of chronic and acute pain as well as other conditions such as autoimmune disease, respiratory illness, addiction, neurological problems, digestive disturbance, infertility and chronic fatigue. As a patient-centered approach, optimal healing happens through a synergistic working partnership between patient and practitioner.

The same is true for allopathic and Chinese medical counterparts whereby teamwork is far more effective to transform the well-being of its community. A recent article in the Wall Street Journal reported that highly revered universities in China, Europe and the U.S. are “wedding Western techniques for analyzing complex biological systems to the Chinese notion of seeing the body as a networked whole”. A Yale University pharmacology professor Yung-Chi Cheng is assessing effectiveness of a Chinese herbal formulation to reduce nausea and diarrhea and enhance treatment for colon cancer. It is simply a matter of time for the partnering of Eastern and Western healthcare approaches - all signs are showing a renewed American healthcare paradigm is in the making.

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Money can buy you a fine dog, but only love can make him wag his tail.

~Kinky Friedman