
OPINION COLUMN

Ancient traditional Chinese medicine approach has relevance in modern times

Melissa Carr, 24 hours

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(FOTOLIA)

When thinking of modern disease management, many think of modern treatments and technology — MRIs, laparoscopic surgeries, sophisticated blood tests and cutting edge pharmaceuticals. This is very much in contrast with some of the methods employed by traditional Chinese medicine.

Many people are surprised to hear that the tongue, pulse, the sound of one's voice, appearance, body temperature, and even smell can give clues to a TCM practitioner about their health issues. Doctors of the ancient practice can use simple tools such as acupuncture needles, glass or plastic cups, food, herbs and hands for treatments.

But the simplicity of these means doesn't deter from the complexity of the systems that form this longstanding and powerful medicine. TCM is founded on a deep understanding of the connections between the details we can observe and the imbalances that result. For example, when someone is experiencing pain, a considerable amount of time is spent asking lots of detailed questions to find out specifics about the pain, like where it's located, exactly how it feels — sharp, dull, throbbing, etc. — what makes it feel better, what makes it feel worse, and so forth.

Some questions might seem unrelated to the pain itself, such as finding out about other health problems, nutritional deficiencies, allergies, and even whether a patient has been feeling more of a particular emotion lately. It's complex.

Though the major health concerns from 2,000 to 5,000 years ago — when TCM was a new medicine — are different from those today, this practice is still growing in relevance. Today's major illnesses, such as heart disease, cancer, chronic fatigue, irritable bowel syndrome, diabetes and environmental sensitivities can be assessed and treated with the same TCM tools that treated tuberculosis, polio, and parasitic infection.

Chronic stress, one of biggest modern day health problem contributors and aggravators, can be treated with acupuncture, which releases feel-good endorphin hormones. Chinese herbs such as Siberian ginseng, goji berries, and schisandra berries have been shown to be adaptogenic. This means they can help the body adapt to changes and stressors.

TCM does not need to see the microscopic virus, the damaged cells, or the bulging disc to truly see and treat the individual with health issues.

Poll

Would you try traditional Chinese medicine?

Friday, April 26, 2013

- ☐ Absolutely!
- ☐ Perhaps...
- ☐ No thanks.

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