

Influence of Traditional Chinese Medicine in the West

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Abstract: Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is an outstanding representative among Chinese civilization, and is widely recognized by people in many countries for its unique advantages in disease prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. TCM is the crystallization of the Chinese civilization, the treasure of ancient Chinese science and a carrier of traditional culture. Through literature review, combined with actual life, the advantages of TCM and its future development methods are comprehensively analyzed. It is precisely because of its increasingly important influence on Western countries that we should pay more attention to its development and make it stand firmly on the world stage.

Keywords: Traditional Chinese Medicine; Globalization; Development

1. Traditional Chinese Medicine

1.1 Introduction

Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), mainly created by the Han Chinese, is a discipline that studies human physiology, pathology, diagnosis, prevention and treatment of diseases, etc. It is a broad range of medicine practices which has been developed in China for more than 2000 years. TCM, based on the theory of Yin-Yang and five elements, considers human body as a unity of Qi, Xing and Shen, primarily dealing with the physiological functions, pathological changes of the viscera, tissues and organs as well as their interrelations. It holds the concept of holism and focuses on the balance of Yin and Yang, body and mind. Through methods of ‘Inspection’, ‘Auscultation and olfaction’, ‘Inquiry’ and ‘Pulse-feeling and palpation’, TCM can directly experience and study the dynamic information of human body and describe the location and tendency of a disease.

1.2 Advantages of TCM

According to Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen, TCM stresses “prevention before diseases rather than treatment on diseases,” which means that TCM always gives prominence to ‘prevention’. For healthy people, prevention can strengthen a powerful physique; for patients, it can prevent pathological changes. TCM attaches great significance to the relationship between people's emotional activities and physical health. If seven emotions (joy, anger, melancholy, anxiety, grief, fear and terror) accumulate too much, they will not only directly hurt the viscera, causing the disturbance of blood, but also damage Qi and decrease the self-regulation ability. Through rational use of TCM to nourish the nature and adjust physical condition can improve the temperament, enhance psychological ability, and prevent disease.

On the other hand, unlike western medicines, TCM has fewer side effects and regards balancing, eliminating and transforming pathogens as the main principles to treat diseases. TCM treatment aims at the root cause of a disease, which refers to improve the imbalance of Yin and Yang through slow recuperation and minimize harm to human body. In the fight against asthenia of heart and liver blood, hypofunction of the spleen and stomach, discordance between water and fire, and insufficiency of kidney YIN etc., TCM plays a vital role.

2. Traditional Chinese Medicine in the West

2.1 Applications of TCM

According to the World Health Organization, 4 billion people use Chinese herbs to treat diseases. In America, one in ten adults has been treated with acupuncture. After the normalization of Sino-US relations in 1972, there was an “acupuncture mania”, and more and more Americans were willing to receive TCM treatments. In England, affected by the temperate maritime climate, most British suffer from rheumatism. TCM uses both oral medicine and external application, complementary with traditional Chinese fumigation to treat rheumatism. Methods like scraping, cupping, acupoint thread-embedding therapy can help the body to relieve meridians, promote blood circulation, remove blood stasis and dehumidify. Therefore, the demand for TCM acupuncturists increased, leading to the appearance of TCM acupuncture training schools.

2.2 Influences of TCM

Malaria is a malignant disease caused by the Plasmodium parasite that has raged around the world for thousands of years. Patients would get a fever and shiver and death occurs on critical patients within days. Tu Youyou, director of the Artemisinin

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Research Center at the Institute of Chinese Materia Medica, China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences, led her team to overcome difficulties, discovered artemisinin, solved the problem of antimalarial treatment, and made great contributions to the innovation of TCM science and technology. The discovery of artemisinin has saved millions of lives around the world, and artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACT) are the best malaria treatment recommended by the World Health Organization. Apart from that, since the outbreak of COVID-19, TCM has been widely used in the treatment process. Clinical efficacy observation shows that the total effective rate of TCM has reached more than 90%. TCM can effectively relieve symptoms, reduce the development from common type to severe type, improve the cure rate, and reduce the death rate. TCM plays a unique role in enhancing immunity and improving symptoms, because it can promote healthy and dispel pathogenic factors, clear away heat and detoxify, and fight against viruses by strengthening the body's resistance. In the face of the global fight against the epidemic, Chinese medical experts have provided Italy, Iraq and other countries with a huge amount of medical supplies, including Lianhua Qingwen Capsule and Jinhua Qinggan Granule.

3. Achieve Globalization of TCM

Secretary Xi Jinping said: "We should explore the essence of TCM, give full play to its unique advantages, promote modernization of TCM, and ultimately bring TCM to the world." It is necessary to provide policy support and improve TCM technology to realize TCM industrialization and modernization and accelerate international cooperation.

3.1 Policy support

In order to gain a permanent foothold in the world, the government needs to remove all barriers that are detrimental to the development of TCM, and accelerates the promotion of TCM commercialization.

The state should formulate policies and regulations to encourage the development of TCM, establish mechanisms for the management, promotion and sharing of results and information, and strengthen the protection and utilization of intellectual property rights and resources of TCM.

In the same time, enterprises need to increase investments in research and development, actively attract private investment and international cooperation funds to form a diversified and multi-channel investment system to support the innovation of TCM.

3.2 Build Innovation System

We will set up key laboratories of TCM, strengthen the construction of TCM clinical research bases, research centers and other scientific and technological platforms to promote the standardization of TCM. More efforts will be focused on problems such as the lack of production standards, deviation from norms or outdated methods during the whole process of Chinese herbal medicine planting, preparing and quality promoting. By solving these problems, we will improve and revise a batch of TCM production standards, strengthen the supervision and identification methods, and systematically build a service support system.

3.3 Broaden Joint Venture Cooperation

With the increasing demand for Chinese herbal medicine in the international market, the Chinese industry is becoming the focus of domestic and overseas capital attention. A large number of listed companies in China take the investments as a new direction of transformation and expansion. Chinese medicine industry is also regarded as the most valuable industry for investment by international capital. Domestic pharmaceutical enterprises should speed up the cooperation with overseas companies and open up more ways for TCM to go abroad. Along with the direction of industrialization and internationalization, our research will soon be in line with the international standards and enter the international market.

4. Conclusion

Traditional Chinese medicine, the one with a complete theoretical basis and clinical system, has withstood the test of time and kept developing and improving. The popularity of artemisinin and the role of TCM in the COVID-19 epidemic further consolidate the position of TCM in the world.

In conclusion, only by transforming the merits of TCM resources and knowledge into industrial and economic advantages can we promote the development of ethnic medicine industry and realize TCM globalization. It still has a long way to go and requires the joint efforts of individuals, enterprises and countries to succeed.

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