

COMMENTARY

Historical Responsibility and Great Trust of the Times —Review and Outlook of 60 Years of Integrative Medicine Clinical Sciences

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The founding of China Institute of Chinese Medicine, known now as the China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences, was proclaimed in December 1955 in Beijing. Premier ZHOU En-lai commemorated the occasion with his inscription extolling "to carry forward the heritage of Chinese medicine". Just before and after its establishment, the Academy recruited numbers of famous Chinese and Western medicine specialists all over the country to participate in this endeavour. The first 'Western Medicine Doctors Learning Chinese Medicine' class was opened by the Ministry of Health and held at Xiyuan Hospital, China Institute of Chinese Medicine. A tremendous amount of work was dedicated to the organization and building of the scientific and medical research team and its reserves. In addition, a large number of young Chinese and Western medicine doctors with recognized academic and clinical abilities were also organized to enter into apprenticeship with famous Chinese medicine masters dedicated to inherit the academic thoughts and to systematically record and study the clinical experiences of these masters. The 'Western Medicine Doctors Learning Chinese Medicine' undertaking followed the central government guidelines 'to study systematically, to master completely, to record and to improve' and created such a great impact resulting in a nationwide following of outstanding outcome. It greatly promoted the development of the realm of Chinese medicine and brought forth even greater strides in fostering the science of integrative Chinese and Western medicines with favourable responses internationally. China's persistent efforts and outstanding achievement in inheriting and improving traditional medical sciences have repeatedly earned praises from the World Health Organization (WHO).

Chinese medicine enjoys thousands of years of brilliant history. It has made indelible contributions to assurance and protection of people's wellbeing, as well as to social progress of the nation. As Western

medicine gradually makes its inroad to China, Chinese and Western medicine professionals were able to have increased exposure, communication and exchanges where it was realized that both medicines have their strengths and shortcomings, and it would be of mutual benefits to enhance unity and cooperation between the two, to complement each other with advantages while avoiding the defects, all for the good of people's health. Undoubtedly, this is a responsibility entrusted by history to generations of us medical practitioners, and it is also a great trust of the times bestowed upon us. We must keep pace with the times, to author a new chapter in the history of Chinese and Western medicines to contribute to humanity.

When New China was first founded, the State advocated the "unity of Chinese and Western medicine" approach. Article 21 of the "Constitution of People's Republic of China" states that "The State is to develop medical and health services and to develop modern medicine and traditional medicine of China". In 1978, China restored its graduate school system and integrative medicine as a discipline was classified a Class I Discipline. For more than 30 years, a great number of graduate students and successor talents of Chinese and Western medicines, both of clinical and basic sciences, have been nurtured and trained. In 1981, Chinese Society of Integrative Medicine (later renamed the Chinese Association of Integrative Medicine sanctioned by China Association of Sciences and Technology) was established which actively promoted academic exchange, and has so far convened four World Integrative Medicine Congress to foster academic exchanges and influences at home and overseas. In the same year, the Association

founded the *Chinese Journal of Integrated Traditional and Western Medicine* and in 1995 an English version of the *Chinese Journal of Integrative Medicine* was published which is a SCI-source journal with 50% each of the editorial board taken up by Chinese and overseas experts. A great number of those who have published articles on these journals are now eminent scientists and experts in the fields of integrative medicine and Chinese medicine serving in positions as lead scientists, professors and chief physicians with impeccable track records. Numerous Chinese medicine universities in Beijing, Guangzhou, Shanghai and Hunan offer 5-year undergraduate or 7-year continuous graduate degrees in integrative medicine which play a significant role in strengthening and developing both the integrative medicine and Chinese medicine disciplines.

In 2003, China State Council promulgated the "Chinese Medicine Regulations of the People's Republic of China" and its Article 3 states: "to promote an organic integration of two different Chinese and Western medicine systems to develop fully the Chinese medicine enterprise". Meeting WHO Director General, Dr. Margaret Chan in June 2013, Chinese President XI Jin-ping stressed the need to "promote integrative medicine and Chinese medicine development in foreign countries". This further illustrates that integrative medicine have gradually been recognized and appreciated by the State, the society and the general public. Many cities of China have integrative medicine hospitals where Chinese and Western medicine techniques complement each other to improve both disease diagnosis and treatment which in turn better serves the society and assures health of the general public. Today, in most of the general hospitals of the country, an integrative medicine or Chinese medicine specialty ward is commonly present. This is especially true at the community level where this practice is applied flexibly providing greater convenience in disease prevention and treatment.

Over the past 60 years, integrative medicine has made huge clinical progress and attained great achievements. Academic Chinese medicine concepts such as attention to the relation between people and nature, the "correspondence between human and universe" concept, and the Chinese medicine healing edicts of "eight principles" and "eight laws"

are put under comprehensive studies together with clinical application to develop coordination and integration as well as macro- and micro-integration of disease syndrome integration concept and syndrome differentiation and treatment concept. This not only improves the levels of diagnosis and treatment, but also brings about a new concept in clinical diagnosis and treatment from a philosophical level of understanding.

Inspired by the teaching of "qi blood equilibrium" emphasized in *Huangdi's Internal Classic* (Huang Di Nei Jing), Xiyuan Hospital of China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences developed the modern activating blood circulation and removing stasis (ABCRS) school. It applies the ABCRS principle in preventing and treating different types of coronary diseases and care of post-vascularization reconstructions, and makes use of randomized controlled trial (RCT) research method in obtaining evidence-based medical results of higher standards. This undertaking was able to be propagated nationwide leading to the birth of a series of proprietary Chinese medications developed based on modern pharmacology and molecular biological mechanisms of action. Various institutes of China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences also obtained outstanding achievements, including international clinical application of artemisinin and its derivatives, and the inventor Prof. Youyou Tu won the Nobel prize for physiology and medicine in 2015. Cure for infectious diseases including severe acute respiratory syndrome, and research on influenza treatment, application of dynamic and static integration principle in fracture treatment, application of strengthening vital qi and consolidating the constitution principle in the treatment of cancer treatment and its medications for maintenance application, phased syndrome differentiation and treatment for diabetes, studies on the mechanism of cold heat syndrome differentiation and treatment and its therapeutic efficacy for rheumatoid arthritis, study of coronary heart disease symptom complex and syndrome differentiation and treatment, study of Shen (Kidney) replenishing, stasis removing and detoxifying medications for aplastic anemia, syndrome differentiation and treatment for functional dyspepsia, cognitive dysfunction treatment research, research on the effect of acupuncture on functional diseases, study of adverse effect of Chinese medicine in clinical applications, etc., and these

studies all have wide influence all over the country.

Other institutes in the country focus on clinical application research of integrative medicine also gain admirable results. We have multi-center RCT study on Xuezhikang (血脂康) by Fuwai Hospital, study of syndrome differentiation and treatment and medications for brain diseases by Beijing University of Chinese Medicine, the application of 'Fu Purging and Toxin Removing' medication in acute abdomen cases including peritoneal infection by Tianjin Nankai Hospital, studies on anti-platelet effect of Qi Replenishing and Blood Activating Compounds by Tianjin University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, the development of injectable medications for acute disease with stasis and toxin by Tianjin First Central Hospital. It is also notable that there are researches in Shanghai and Harbin on effect of arsenic trioxide in the treatment of myeloid leukemia, development of Chinese medicines for treatment of hepatic fibrosis and for prevention and treatment of degenerative diseases in Shanghai, as well as the use of Shen replenishing principle in delaying ageing, research on cardiocerebral diseases medications based on collateral disease theory in Hebei Province, and research studies into the effect of acupuncture as an ancillary means to enhance *in vitro* reproductive function by the Medical Department of Beijing Medical University. There are so many outstanding achievements on the horizon of integrative medicine, and this is truly amazing.

Recently, the Integrative Medicine Committee of China Medical Doctor Association together with Evidence-Based Medical Professional Committee of Chinese Association of Integrative Medicine issued

"Guidelines to Clinical Research Methods for Chinese and Integrative Medicine" which was published by the People's Medical Publishing House. Committees of various disciplines of the Association as well as other academic bodies all contributed to the establishment of research method guidelines compliant with Chinese medical theories and at the same time in correlation to modern clinical, medical and scientific practices. These guidelines are based on consensus of experts' recommendations and it is believed that on this foundation of clinical studies methodology improvement, clinical integrative medicine will advance further to the next level.

Institutes affiliated with China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences taking various clinical disciplines in stride have conducted multi-faceted, multi-disciplinary in-depth basic medical science research studies on Chinese medicine pharmacology, genomics, proteomics, metabolomics as well as molecular biology with most outstanding results. What the China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences set down in the 50's as the research and development direction which is 'to confirm efficacy, to consolidate patterns and to investigate the mechanisms of action' shall continue to serve as the guiding light leading us moving forward with prudence to bring forth greater achievement.

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