

The Irresistible Trend of Aging: Traditional Chinese Medicine Can Make a Difference

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COVID-19 erupted in Wuhan in early 2020, and then the world was in trouble. In the battle against COVID-19, traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) exerts a pivotal role in mainland China. Thousands of patients with COVID-19 have benefited from TCM. TCM has successfully showed its therapeutic effects on public health issues. However, can TCM do more in the health care system? The answer is probably yes.

Due to the development of society, a massive of elderly people are exist in China and the number of aging populations will continue to increase sharply. The imbalance between medical demand and supply is a challenge for the government. Considering public finance sustainability, governors turn their attention to TCM. They hope TCM can address the concern.

Chinese people have been fighting diseases for thousands of years. TCM was formed during the history of combating against illness. Due to the distinct oriental philosophy, TCM regard human bodies as a whole. The disorder of mental, physical and spiritual of patients would result in disease. Additional, social and natural factors also impose influence on patients. Consequently, when treat patients, TCM focus on the factors above. Means of treatments including herbs, acupuncture, moxibustion, tai chi, qigong, massage, meditation and so on, are used to treat sick person.

Now, in the face of an aging society, TCM can make a difference. A large body of evidence indicates that TCM demonstrate efficacy on chronic diseases and cancers. Firstly, tai chi and qigong are effective options for patients with chronic diseases and cancers, because of the improvement of the quality of life(1-11). In addition, patients with neurological diseases such as Parkinson disease (PD) and dementia embrace tai chi and qigong to improve nonmotor symptoms and functional mobility(2, 12-22). Secondly,

acupuncture can be widely used in many diseases. For chronic pain, acupuncture can alleviate this symptom(23-28). Acupuncture is also effective in chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) (29-31), heart failure(32, 33), hypertension(34-36), diabetes(37, 38), chronic kidney disease(39, 40), etc. Thirdly, decoctions and herbs can benefit many ailments(41-44). Lastly, meditation(45, 46), massage(47, 48) and moxibustion(49, 50) are the effective therapeutic approaches to treat diseases.

Despite great advances with western medicine in the past decades, some difficulties remain. For example, some diseases cannot be treated yet and increasing medical expenditures are hard to burden. Now more and more aging populations leads to a challenge to the medical system. TCM may play a critical role combined with western medicine in health care because of its therapeutic effects. The Chinese government attaches great importance to the development of TCM, especially undergo the anti-COVID-19 campaign. Elderly patients may benefit a lot. TCM can help them to raise health and wellbeing. However, some limitations still presence. Firstly, the safety of TCM is essential. Thus, a lot of study should to be conducted. Secondly, large-scale randomized controlled trials are imperative. Clinical evidence is fundamental to the utilization of TCM. Thirdly, some mechanisms of TCM are still unclear. Last, more attention should pay to the promotion and popularization of TCM. People from every country can receive TCM to protect their health.

In a word, TCM maybe one of the answers to the medical problems caused by aging trend. We hope TCM can help the growing aging population.

AUTHOR DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

No competing interests declared.

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