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Congress proceedings

I INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES IN HEALTH

World Tour of ZHE's TCM in Portugal

ONLINE | JUNE 24 2023

Organized by:

Portuguese Institute of Taiji and Qigong – Portugal
School of Humanities and Management of Zhejiang Chinese Medical University – China

In partnership with:

Confucius Institute of the University of Coimbra – Portugal
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Editorial Note: The abstracts featured in this issue, pertaining to the I International Congress on Complementary Therapies in Health, have been made available by the authors exclusively for the purpose of this publication. It is worth noting that certain communications presented at the aforementioned congress have not been included in this particular publication.

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Editorial

The I International Congress on Complementary Therapies in Health.

The First International Congress on Complementary Therapies in Health was held online on June 24, 2023. The primary objective of the event was to facilitate networking among Portuguese researchers, students, international experts, and specialists while showcasing the potential of complementary therapies. However, an unforeseen partnership with Zhejiang Chinese Medical University and the Confucius Institute of the University of Coimbra elevated the significance of the congress. This collaborative support expanded the congress's goals to encompass a more profound impact on the field. In addition to fostering networking and knowledge dissemination, the congress embraced the mission of contributing to the implementation of complementary therapies in the healthcare sector. This endeavor seeks to enhance both public access to evidence-based complementary therapies and the potency of conventional treatments. The scientific committee of the event acknowledges the sensitivity of this subject, emphasizing the crucial importance of undertaking meaningful scientific research on these therapies. The future progress of the field hinges upon such research to establish its credibility. To this end, the Zhejiang Chinese Medical University has created an International Development Alliance with an action plan aiming to create a mechanism for an enduring international cooperation, explore new channels and modes for the internationalization of the School of Zhe's TCM, and build a higher-quality overseas traditional Chinese medicine service system. In addition, the Confucius Institute of the University of Coimbra has an important role in the Portugal-China bond and implemented several projects to develop Chinese medicine in Portugal. As well, another partner of this event, the Health Level of the Atlântico Business School has developed several courses in non-conventional therapies such as traditional Chinese medicine, quickly establishing its presence and attracting students from Portugal and abroad. Furthermore, the Portuguese Institute of Taiji and Qigong has spearheaded multiple scientific research projects and introduced the first evidence-based instructor-therapist programs of Taiji and Qigong in Portugal. The institute has also undertaken the organization of this journal and congress. However, more than each on its own, it is the collaboration between Zhejiang Chinese Medical University, the Confucius Institute of the University of Coimbra, the Atlântico Business School, and the Portuguese Institute of Taiji and Qigong that lends utmost significance to these endeavors. This powerful multinational connection and cooperation significantly amplify the reach, profoundly deepen knowledge, and passionately nurture a culture of research, laying the foundation for a truly transformative future in the field.

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Jorge Magalhães Rodrigues MSc, Lac, CMD, EP, Editor-in-chief

Keynote Communication

Daoyin, Qigong, Taichi and Yoga: Relations, Similarities and Differences.

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Abstract: The traditional Chinese exercise system has a history of thousands of years and modern researches have begun to show the effectiveness of it. The most frequently heard Chinese traditional exercises for health preservation are taichi, daoyin and qigong. However, since their concepts are overlapped, people will sometimes be confused with them. They have relations and similarities, but also have differences. It is even the same case with yoga. Through literature research, the history, training purpose and features of taichi, daoyin and qigong are compared. Moreover, they are also compared with yoga in respects of holism, posture and movement, breath, mind regulation and functions. Thus, people could have better understanding of the concepts of taichi, daoyin, qigong and yoga.

Keywords: Traditional Chinese exercises, Daoyin, Qigong, Taichi, Yoga, Literature research.

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Keynote communication

Health Preservation by Acupoints.

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Abstract: This communication focuses on the use of acupoints for health preservation in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). Six commonly used acupoints, including Baihui, Fengchi, Mingmen, Guanyuan, Zusanli, and Sanyinjiao, are discussed. Each acupoint is associated with specific functions and therapeutic benefits in TCM practice. Baihui regulates the spirit and treats related conditions, while Fengchi is effective for wind-related ailments and improves sensory functions. Mingmen warms the kidney and treats symptoms of kidney yang deficiency, and Guanyuan tonifies qi and treats gynecological disorders. Zusanli is considered the primary acupoint for tonifying qi and blood and strengthening the spleen and stomach. Sanyinjiao invigorates the spleen, regulates menstruation, and aids in weight loss. It is important to consult with a qualified TCM practitioner to ensure appropriate treatment and individualized care. These acupoints exemplify the rich heritage and efficacy of TCM health preservation practices.

Keywords: Health preservation, Acupoints, Acupuncture, Moxibustion, Sel-massage.

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Keynote communication

Acupuncture for Beauty.

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Abstract: Cosmetic acupuncture is a practice rooted in traditional Chinese medicine that stimulates the skin and regulates organ systems to improve skin health and combat signs of aging. It combines holistic treatment with cosmetic goals, offering natural and beneficial results. The selection of acupuncture points, techniques such as shallow needling, thread embedding, cupping, and moxibustion, among others, are used to target specific skin conditions and promote rejuvenation. Cosmetic acupuncture is safe, comprehensive, and effective in addressing various skin concerns while adhering to the principles of traditional Chinese medicine.

Keywords: Beauty, Cosmetology, Acupuncture, Acupoints, Moxibustion, Cupping.

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Keynote Communication

Can Traditional Chinese Medicine Benefit Mental Health?

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Abstract: Mental health issues can have physical, emotional, and financial consequences, affecting individuals, their families, friends, and society as a whole. Alternative approaches can offer new possibilities for enhancing global mental health. This study aims to analyze existing evidence regarding the effectiveness of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) in treating mental health conditions and to explore potential applications within Western healthcare systems. We conducted a thorough search of PubMed, Cochrane, Web of Science, Science Direct, and Scielo databases to identify studies on TCM techniques for mental health, specifically focusing on meta-analyses involving human subjects. Studies that investigated mental health in relation to other diseases were also included, while low or moderate-quality studies were excluded. Our search yielded 319 studies, reduced to 265 after removing duplicates. Following a screening of titles and abstracts, 40 studies were selected for further examination. Full-text assessment and quality evaluation were performed on 38 studies, ultimately including 32 studies in the final analysis. Introducing TCM into the healthcare system has the potential to positively impact the treatment of certain mental disorders and enhance the quality of life for patients with other illnesses. TCM may also benefit populations lacking the access to conventional therapies. However, further research is necessary, and improvements in methodological quality are required. The study protocol has been registered with the International Prospective Registry for Systematic Reviews (PROSPERO CRD42021276118), and the article was published in the journal *Brain Behavior and Immunity – Integrative* (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bbih.2023.100013>).

Keywords: Mental health, Tradicional Chinese medicine, CAM, Integrative medicine.

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Keynote Communication

Pain Management Using Acupuncture, old challenges and new opportunities - a narrative review.

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Abstract: Pain management is a crucial aspect of healthcare, affecting individuals both physically and emotionally. Acupuncture has emerged as a potential therapeutic approach for various pain conditions. We aim to summarize the effectiveness of acupuncture in pain management based on existing research, explore underlying mechanisms of its action and point future research opportunities and directions. Chronic pain still remains as one of the most prevalent chronic conditions worldwide with a significant portion of the population experiencing persistent pain. Acupuncture has shown promising results in addressing pain associated with osteoarthritis (OA), chronic low back pain, tension-type headaches, and migraines supported by numerous systematic reviews and meta-analyses. Those have demonstrated the superiority of acupuncture over sham or routine care in reducing pain frequency and intensity, as well as improving physical function. Understanding the mechanisms through which acupuncture exerts its effects is essential. Studies have indicated that acupuncture stimulates the release of endogenous opioids, such as endorphins, enkephalins, and dynorphins, which play a role in pain modulation. Additionally, acupuncture has anti-inflammatory effects by regulating the release of inflammatory cytokines and inhibiting the activation of microglia and astrocytes, thereby reducing neuroinflammation and pain sensitization. The modulation of neurotransmitters and receptors, as well as the regulation of central nervous system activity, have also been implicated in acupuncture's pain-relieving effects. Future research directions and opportunities in acupuncture for pain management includes investigating the impact of distal point stimulation and possible relation with the evidence of contralateral neurite loss on pain intensity and somatotopically-specific improvements in white matter microstructure, and studying the role of the fascial system and bio tensegrity in acupuncture stimulation propagation. Furthermore, communication pathways through the extracellular matrix, specifically involving proteoglycans and glycosaminoglycans, are proposed as potential areas of investigation. Acupuncture has shown promising efficacy in pain management, particularly in conditions such as OA, chronic low back pain, tension-type headaches, and migraines. The mechanisms underlying its effects involve the release of endogenous opioids, modulation of neuroinflammation, regulation of neurotransmitters, and modulation of central nervous system activity. Further research is needed exploring these mechanisms and to identify specific factors contributing to acupuncture's effectiveness in pain management.

Keywords: Acupuncture, Pain management, Chronic pain, Distal acupuncture, Biotensegrity.

Citation: Gonçalves R, Moreira Júnior L, Marçalo J, Ribeiro D. Pain Management Using Acupuncture, old challenges and new opportunities - a narrative review. *Journal of Complementary Therapies in Health*. 2023;1(1). doi:10.5281/zenodo.8155188

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Specialist Workshop

Qigong for Longevity.

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Abstract: In a world where the pursuit of longevity and vitality has become a paramount concern, Qigong, an ancient Chinese practice, offers a compelling solution. This presentation explores the profound relationship between Qigong and longevity, shedding light on the principles and practices that can enhance our physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Qigong, meaning "life energy cultivation," is a holistic system that integrates movement, meditation, and breath control to cultivate and balance the body's vital energy, known as Qi. The harmonious flow of Qi throughout the body is believed to be essential for overall health, resilience, and longevity. By engaging in specific Qigong exercises, individuals can tap into this innate life force and optimize their well-being. This presentation delves into the core concepts and benefits of Qigong practice. We will explore how Qigong exercises promote relaxation, reduce stress, and enhance mental clarity. Through the gentle, flowing movements and focused breathwork, practitioners can improve circulation, boost the immune system, and strengthen the body's natural healing mechanisms. We will also explore the profound impact of Qigong on emotional well-being, with its ability to release negative emotions, foster inner peace, and promote a sense of interconnectedness. Scientifically, Qigong is being studied on a range of health outcomes, including cardiovascular health, cognitive function, and risk of chronic diseases. These findings underscore the potential of Qigong as a preventive and therapeutic tool for achieving longevity and maintaining vitality throughout the lifespan. Attendees will have the opportunity to learn and experience simple Qigong exercises firsthand, emphasizing the accessibility and adaptability of this practice for individuals of all ages and fitness levels. By integrating Qigong into their daily lives, participants can cultivate a sustainable self-care routine, promoting longevity, resilience, and overall well-being. In summary, this presentation offers a comprehensive exploration of Qigong as a powerful tool for longevity. By harnessing the innate life energy within us, we can unlock the keys to vibrant health, mental clarity, and spiritual growth. The insights and practices shared in this session will empower attendees to embark on a transformative journey towards a long and fulfilling life.

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Keywords: Qigong, Longevity, Preventive therapy.

Specialist masterclass

Kan Li Acupuncture 坎离针灸 Channel Based Acupuncture.

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Abstract: Kan (☵ = Water = Yin) and Li (☲ = Fire = Yang) are the classical basis for the understanding and application of Yin and Yang in Chinese Medicine, as can be referenced by the most important and relevant Classical books. As in Su Wen 5: Water is Yin, Fire is Yang, Yang is Qi, Yin is Flavor. The theory of Yin and Yang is considered the most essential of all Chinese Medicine, and the Channel Theory is the basis of the Classical practice of Acupuncture. In this way, it is vital for the good practice of Acupuncture, rescuing the classic principles, that the professional can integrate the concept of Channel-Based Acupuncture into daily practice, according to the influence of the general principles of Yin and Yang, duly applied to the different parts of the body. As described in the Nan Jing 67, for example: “Yin Disease moves to Yang, Yang Disease moves to Yin”; with the aim of an effective clinical practice, the professional must first have a three-dimensional view of the application of Yin and Yang in the body, to know how to balance the correspondences and relationships between the different parts anatomically. Balancing up and down, front and back, left and right, interior and exterior is the basis of a good acupuncture treatment. It is the practical application of the classic concept of balancing Yin and Yang and this must be achieved not only through clinical reasoning for the acupuncture points, but through the traditional way of thinking through Channel Based Acupuncture. Based on these basic principles in resonance with the Theory of Channels and Collaterals, point selection and combination can be very useful for the treatment of different conditions, including pain, limitation on range of movement and so on.

Keywords: Acupuncture, Balance, Yin-Yang, Channels.

Citation: Silva-Filho R. Kan Li Acupuncture 坎离针灸 Channel Based Acupuncture. Journal of Complementary Therapies in Health. 2023;1(1) doi:10.5281/zenodo.8114437

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Communication

New complementary approaches to anxiety treatment - Preliminary Results of a Narrative Review.

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Abstract: Anxiety disorders are prevalent mental health conditions with increasing numbers due to various factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, armed conflicts, and climate changes. Besides, individual, provider, and systemic barriers can limit access to effective mental health services. To address these challenges and expand treatment options, traditional and modern complementary therapies have gained attention. This review focuses on acupuncture, mindfulness-based practices, virtual reality, music therapy, and the use of cannabidiol (CBD) and classical psychedelics. The findings suggest that acupuncture and electroacupuncture may have benefits in reducing anxiety symptoms, but more research with improved methodology is required. Mindfulness-based practices, including mindfulness exercises, yoga, Taijiquan, and Qigong, show promising results in reducing anxiety levels, although further high-quality studies are needed. Virtual reality-based therapy offers customizable experiences to confront anxiety-inducing situations. Music therapy demonstrates potential in alleviating anxiety symptoms. Additionally, emerging evidence suggests that CBD, ayahuasca, psilocybin, and LSD may have anxiolytic properties, but further extensive studies are necessary to understand their efficacy, safety, and practicality for anxiety treatment. These complementary approaches provide additional options for managing anxiety, complementing conventional treatments and addressing the growing prevalence of anxiety disorders.

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Communication

Chinese Medicine on Infertility - Preliminary results of a scoping review.

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Abstract: Infertility is a complex disorder with significant medical, psychosocial, and economic aspects and is a growing global health problem. Common therapeutic methods for infertility may include medical treatments and alternative and complementary medicine (ACM). However, medical treatments have adverse reactions, and they could be expensive, emotionally and financially. Thus, there is an urgent need for an ACM like Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). It becomes important to obtain greater robustness, quality and precision in the studies that use TCM methods. Identify, examine, and summarize available evidence about the treatment of female infertility with TCM and identify gaps in knowledge and studies, in order to improve further studies and recognize better ways to manage female infertility. For this scoping review six databases were searched using a search strategy with predefined keywords. Clinical Trials and Randomized Controlled Trials published from 2017 to 2022 were included. All the studies were related to women participants with a diagnosis of infertility according to World Health Organization (WHO). All of them have female pregnancies and/or live births as outcome. Studies with women being submitted to in vitro fertilization were excluded. Data were extracted on the authors, year, aim, sample size, pathology associated with infertility, used treatment, evaluated parameters, acupoints and/or plants used, main results and study quality. To evaluate the study quality the revised Downs and Black checklist was used (high internal consistency (0.89) as well as all subscales, except external validity (0.54)). Searches identified nine clinical studies. The therapeutic approach in each study was phytotherapy (n=4), acupuncture (n=3), acupuncture and phytotherapy (n=1) and moxibustion (n=1). Phytotherapy studies used different herbal mixtures based on them kidney-tonifying properties, antioxidant and polyphenolic properties or dopaminergic actions. The most used plants were: *Rizhoma discoriae*, *Semen cuscudae*, *Rizhoma Paeoniae alba*, *Fructus corni*. The most used acupoints were: CV4, CV6, CV3, LR3, SP10, SP6, LI4, ST9 and Ex-CA1. Two of the studies that used only phytotherapy had a higher pregnancy rate ($p < 0.05$). There was a higher pregnancy rate ($p < 0.05$) in the combined therapy group (letrozole and Human Chorionic Gonadotropin (HCG) + eletroacupuncture combined with ginger-isolated moxibustion). The study that combined phytotherapy with acupuncture showed a higher pregnancy rate compared to the sham acupuncture group ($p = 0.008$). In the moxibustion study, there was a higher pregnancy rate ($p < 0.05$) in the observational group (moxibustion + clomiphene citrate) compared to the control group (clomiphene citrate).

Keywords: Chinese medicine, Women infertility, Acupuncture, Phytotherapy, Moxibustion, Pregnancy rate.

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Communication

Traditional Chinese Medicine and Endometriosis – Preliminary Results of a Systematic Review.

Joana Calado^{1,*} , Marisa Santos¹  and Carlos Aurélio Pereira¹ .¹ ABS – Health Level Atlântico Business School, Vila Nova de Gaia, Portugal.* Correspondence: joana.c.calado@gmail.com

Abstract: Endometriosis is a prevalent and debilitating condition characterized by pelvic pain and infertility. Despite its significant impact on women's health, endometriosis is often underdiagnosed, leading to delays in obtaining a correct diagnosis. This highlights the need for a comprehensive understanding of the condition's broader effects on women's health, including potential links to autoimmune diseases, cancer, and cardiovascular disorders. Taking a holistic approach to managing endometriosis and promoting overall well-being is essential. Exploring complementary techniques, such as Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), can offer new possibilities for enhancing endometriosis management. TCM takes a holistic approach to health and has gained interest in Western countries. Our objective is to identify systematic reviews with meta-analyses of TCM interventions for endometriosis performed in the past ten years. Our preliminary results indicate that eleven studies were included in the final analysis, mainly focusing on Chinese herbal medicine and acupuncture. Chinese herbal medicine demonstrated potential benefits as an adjuvant therapy for endometriosis treatment, such as the Guizhi fuling formula and herbal formulas combined with dienogest. *Salvia miltiorrhiza*-containing herbal medicine showed promise in enhancing pregnancy rates and reducing recurrence and adverse effects. Acupuncture was found to significantly reduce pain associated with endometriosis. Although more evidence is needed to confirm the positive effects of TCM techniques on endometriosis, Chinese herbal medicine and acupuncture show potential as complementary therapies in the management of endometriosis. These techniques could offer effective and safe treatment options when integrated into Western medical settings, ultimately improving the well-being of individuals affected by this debilitating disease.

Keywords: Traditional Chinese medicine, Acupuncture, Herbal medicine, Endometriosis.

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Poster presentation

Qigong for all Ages: A Preliminary Review on Stress and Quality of Life.

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Abstract: This poster presents an ongoing narrative review exploring the therapeutic use of Qigong for stress reduction and improvement of quality of life across various age groups. Stress, as a state of tension or pressure, can have adverse effects on both physical and mental health, deeply affecting quality of life. Qigong, a practice combining gentle movements, breathing techniques, and meditation, offers therapeutic benefits such as stress reduction and enhanced quality of life. Research indicates that Qigong can be beneficial for individuals of all ages, including children, adolescents, and adults. In children and youth, Qigong practice has demonstrated improvements in attention, anxiety reduction, and the promotion of relaxation and focus. These benefits can positively impact academic performance and overall well-being. For adults, particularly healthcare professionals, Qigong has proven effective in reducing emotional exhaustion and alleviating stress. Practitioners reported decreased emotional drain, increased resilience, and improved sleep quality. Additionally, Qigong has shown benefits for hospital employees by reducing stress levels and enhancing job satisfaction. In summary, Qigong serves as a holistic practice that enhances physical, emotional, and cognitive well-being across different age groups. It provides an accessible and effective approach for managing stress and cultivating a higher quality of life.

Keywords: Qigong, Stress, Quality of life, Children, Adolescents, Adults.

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Poster presentation

New Area of Cranial Acupuncture in the Treatment of Dizziness and Vertigo.

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Abstract: Between 20% and 30% of adults experience dizziness at some point in their lives, with various causes including changes in the central nervous system, benign paroxysmal positional vertigo, hyperventilation syndrome, ear diseases (such as Meniere's disease and vestibular neuritis), cardiovascular diseases, cerebrovascular diseases, Whiplash syndrome (with 80 to 90% of patients experiencing dizziness), adverse effects of medications, and aging, among others. These vertigo syndromes can be disabling, impacting patients' ability to lead a normal life. To address this condition, tests were conducted on a new area of cranioacupuncture that showed effectiveness in treating dizziness. Based on neuroanatomical foundations and the Zhu Scalp Acupuncture (ZSA) methodology, this new treatment area targets the projection region of the auditory association cortex, aiming to reverse sensory changes. Three clinical cases of adult patients with dizziness were presented, where the intervention involved bilateral puncture in the specified area with a needle retention time of 60 minutes. The evaluation of dizziness sensation was assessed using a visual analog scale (EVA), where patients were asked to rate their dizziness from total absence (zero) to extreme sensation (ten) before and after treatment. After four treatments with this specific area (twice a week for two weeks), all patients reported no longer experiencing dizziness. Additionally, one patient with accompanying tinnitus showed a decrease in its intensity. The proposed name for this new treatment area, suggested by Traditional Chinese Medicine specialist Paula Sousa, is the "Epley Area," as it has a similar effect to the Epley maneuver. The application of this area has demonstrated significant efficacy in relieving the sensation of dizziness.

Keywords: Dizziness, Vertigo, Craniopuncture, Epley area.

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Poster presentation

Tuina in Dogs.

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Abstract: The Tuina technique is a therapeutic approach that involves stimulating acupoints, muscles, and fascia to enhance and restore the circulation of Qi and Xue. By aligning and restoring normal anatomical relationships among bones, muscles, ligaments, and tendons, Tuina promotes pain relief and improved bodily function. While further research is necessary to substantiate the benefits of animal Tuina, there is a growing body of evidence supporting its effectiveness. A study published in the Journal of Animal Science and Technology in 2020 investigated the efficacy of Tuina in the recovery of dogs with intervertebral disc syndrome, demonstrating significant improvement compared to conventional treatment. Additionally, a study published in the Journal of Veterinary Medical Science in 2019 evaluated the effectiveness of Tuina in enhancing joint function in dogs with osteoarthritis, resulting in noteworthy improvements in mobility and joint functionality

Keywords: Tuina, Dogs, Pain, Acupoints, Chronic diseases.

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Poster presentation

Chinese Herbal Medicine for Skin Conditions.

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Abstract: Dermatologic diseases have a significant impact on patients' quality of life and can lead to severe health consequences. Addressing the prevention and treatment of these conditions is crucial for global health strategies. Traditional techniques, such as traditional Chinese phytopharmacology (herbal medicine), hold promise in contributing to dermatologic care. This study aims to review the current evidence on the effectiveness of traditional Chinese herbal medicine in treating dermatologic conditions and explore its potential applications within western healthcare settings. A systematic literature search was conducted in several databases to identify randomized clinical trials on Chinese herbal medicine for dermatologic conditions. Studies with low or moderate quality were excluded. From the initial search, 151 studies were identified, resulting in 135 unique studies after removing duplicates. After screening titles and abstracts, 38 studies were selected for retrieval. Full-text assessment and quality evaluation were performed on 33 studies, with 18 studies ultimately included in the final analysis. The evidence suggests that Chinese phytopharmacology can serve as a complementary treatment for certain dermatologic conditions. The presence of components with anti-fungal, anti-bacterial, anti-viral, anti-inflammatory, and immunomodulatory properties seems to provide significant benefits. However, further studies are needed to confirm and establish the complementary benefits of Chinese phytopharmacology for dermatologic conditions. The protocol for this study has been registered with the International Prospective Registry for Systematic Reviews (PROSPERO CRD42022308304), and published in the journal *Pharmacological Research - Modern Chinese Medicine* (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.prmcm.2023.100255>). The findings from this study can inform healthcare professionals and contribute to the integration of traditional Chinese herbal medicine into western healthcare settings.

Keywords: Chinese herbal medicine, Traditional Chinese medicine, Dermatology.

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Poster presentation

Acupuncture and Phytotherapy for Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia - a case study.

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Abstract: The first recorded dissection took place in China in 16 AD under Emperor Wang Mang's orders. This event marked a significant milestone, as it took another 1500 years for dissections to occur in the Western world. Wang Mang's initiative promoted the study of anatomy in China, leading to the identification of meridians, which are neurovascular bundles connecting organs in Chinese medicine. This differs from Western medicine, which focuses on nerves and blood vessels. These distinct anatomical perspectives result in divergent clinical analyses. The prostate gland is a gland that contributes fluids to semen. It is located near the bladder and has a complex anatomical structure consisting of connective tissue, smooth muscle fibers, and glandular cells. In Eastern medicine, the prostate is associated with the flow of specific vessels, such as the Governor Vessel, Conception Vessel, and Penetrating Vessel. These vessels are linked to the prostate, hypothalamus, and pituitary gland. Furthermore, the prostate has connections to the Kidney and the heart, influencing fertility and energy distribution. It also plays a role in storing essence, an essential energy for human balance. Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH) is viewed differently in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) compared to Western medicine. In Western medicine, BPH is primarily treated with muscle relaxants or medications targeting prostate enlargement. The obstruction of urine flow and the physiological changes in the bladder are the key focus. However, TCM approaches BPH by considering three main factors: deficiencies in the Kidney, Spleen, and Lung; stagnation of Essence; and stagnation of Blood. TCM sees the prostate as connected to fluid accumulation, fertility, and genital health, emphasizing holistic concepts and treatments such as herbal therapy and acupuncture. This reflects a distinct anatomophysiological perspective in TCM compared to the anatomical approach of Western medicine.

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Poster presentation

Acupuncture and fMRI – Preliminary Results of a Systematic Review.

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Abstract: Acupuncture, a traditional Chinese therapy involving needle insertion into specific body areas, remains biologically enigmatic despite its widespread global use, with potential mechanisms including the visceral-cutaneous reflex, axon bifurcation, viscerosomatic reflex, and intricate somatosensory stimulation, while neuroimaging studies, particularly functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), have revealed a complex network of brain regions involved in acupuncture's effects encompassing somatosensory, affective, and cognitive processing. A comprehensive search for randomized clinical trials on the effects of acupuncture using fMRI as a measurement tool was conducted, covering multiple databases and applying specific inclusion and exclusion criteria, followed by independent review and quality assessment using the modified Downs and Black checklist, with data extraction performed by two investigators and discrepancies resolved through discussion with a third investigator. The initial search yielded 186 records, resulting in 27 included studies after the removal of duplicates, title and abstract screening, full-text review, and quality assessment, with the studies covering various conditions including pain, gastrointestinal conditions, miscellaneous conditions, cognitive impairment and stroke, and women's menstrual health. In the context of pain, the studies on contralateral and ipsilateral acupuncture for chronic shoulder pain demonstrated improvements in pain intensity and shoulder function, with distinct brain activation patterns observed. Contralateral acupuncture at ST38 showed better results, potentially involving the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) and the regulation of functional connectivity density, while ipsilateral acupuncture affected the cerebellum, thalamus, and the reduction of functional connectivity. Acupuncture for low back pain revealed increased resting-state functional connectivity (rsFC) between the amygdala and ventral tegmental area (VTA) and periaqueductal gray (PAG), suggesting the involvement of the amygdala in pain modulation and emotion processing, while reduced rsFC was observed between the insula, precuneus, and VTA/PAG, indicating acupuncture's influence on pain perception and the default mode network..

Keywords: Acupuncture, Pain, Functional magnetic resonance imaging.

Citation: Ventura C, Alvarenga A, Monte J, Silva A, Rodrigues JM, Santos RV. Acupuncture and fMRI – Preliminary Results of a Systematic Review. *Journal of Complementary Therapies in Health*. 2023;1(1). doi:10.5281/zenodo.8170207

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