The Current Situations and Tendencies of Acupuncture

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1. The current Situation of Acupuncture

- **1.1 Clinical Manifestation**

  As an alternative medicine, acupuncture has been preferred and adopted by more countries. Acupuncture, which is easy to obtain, cheap, and efficient, is an effective way to realize “Health for all” project advocated by WHO and solve the problem of increasing medical expense troubling many countries. It has already been integrated into mainstream medical care system by some countries and serves national health care together with modern medicine. It is estimated that acupuncture has been applied in over 130 countries.

2. Acupuncture Education

- Acupuncture education develops quickly in the world. Initially, informal educational institutions organized by NGOs and individuals emerged. In recent years, more and more acupuncture educational institutions related to government or sponsored by government have been set up. They have two basic features:

- 1) Acupuncture education has been introduced into officially recognized universities in some countries, including China, Japan, South Korea, Viet Nam, the United States, UK, France, Germany, Australia, Malaysia, Russia and other countries.

- 2) Acupuncture training is prospering.

- The number of students taking training courses in Asia, Europe and America or receiving education or training in China is increasing annually.

1.3 Research Situation

- Acupuncture research in the world has the following features:
- High starting point. A majority of them are scientific research institutes and universities. For instance, China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences is charged with a number of natural science foundation projects and “973 research project”. NIH has conducted various acupuncture researches.
- Projects with noticeable clinical effects are preferred, such as treatment of pain with acupuncture.
- Interdisciplinary between research notion and technique, like chaos theory, quantum physics, and nanotechnology.
- ④ Transnational cooperation in scientific research, for example, cooperation between China and America, China, Japan and South Korea, international clinical research with multi centers organized by WFAS.

1.4 Acupuncture Legislation

- The influence and recognition of acupuncture are subject to the approval of local laws. Responding to the advocate of WHO, many countries, supported by government and local acupuncture societies, have introduced laws on acupuncture. For example:
- In 2000, Virginia State of Australia passed Acupuncture Bill.
- In 2000, Israel approved “Israeli Acupuncture Law” bill.
- In 2001, Ministry of Health of Thailand declared that Acupuncture is legitimate in Thailand.
- In 2002, Ministry of Health of UK instituted Herbal Medicine Working Group and Acupuncture Legislation Working Group and promulgated “Herbal Medicine and Acupuncture Statute Consultative Text” in March, 2004.

- Legislation for acupuncture has been undertaken in 44 states and District of Columbia in America. National legislation for acupuncture has not been promulgated yet by the federal government, but FDA, an administration affiliated to U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, classified acupuncture as medical device, which indirectly approves acupuncture medicine.

1.5 International Exchange

- Having a membership of 115 societies in 50 countries, WFAS convenes an academic conference annually with over 1000 participants. WFAS establishes formal relations with WHO as a NGO and makes a cooperative plan every three years. The third cooperative plan has been completed.
- In addition, there are about 1000 non-governmental academic organizations engaged in Chinese medicine and acupuncture. Over 10 influential academic activities are held annually.

2. Tendency of Acupuncture

- **2.1 Standardized Management of Acupuncture:**

  Standardized management of acupuncture medicine, including standardized legislation of acupuncture and standardized education of acupuncture.

2.1.1 Legislation for Acupuncture

The effects of acupuncture medicine are observed by more countries. They recognize and hope to accept acupuncture medicine. To use acupuncture in an orderly, safe, and effective way, more countries or regions legislate laws on acupuncture. Although legislation for acupuncture has not been introduced in some countries, insurance companies have already recognized the effects of acupuncture and agree to cover the costs of acupuncture treatment.

2.1.2 Standardized Education

- Acupuncture-moxibustion has unique theoretical system and standard for operation. Therefore, a doctor who wants to have a good grasp of acupuncture-moxibustion and become a qualified acupuncturist should systematically study the theory of acupuncture-moxibustion and standard for safe operation, whether he is a western medicine doctor or a non-western medicine doctor. Currently, a growing number of countries are paying more attention to the standardization of regular education and continuing education.

2.1.2 Standardized Education

- **Diploma education is standardized.** In accordance with local educational system, a growing number of countries usher in acupuncture course and acupuncture program in colleges and carry out formal acupuncture diploma education.
- **Continuing education is standardized.** More countries launch continuing education and training of acupuncture for acupuncture practitioners and hold examinations for them on the basis of ***"Regulation for acupuncture training and safety" and regulation of acupuncture education and training.***

- Regulation for acupuncture training and safety stipulates that **a learner who is not a patient and willing to become a acupuncturist**, should receive ***2500 training classes,*** among which at least ***1000 classes should be clinical practice.***

- **A learner, who has certification of western medicine and hopes to become an acupuncturist,** should receive ***1500 training classes,*** among which at least ***1000 classes should be clinical practice.***

- **A learner, who has certification of western medicine and takes acupuncture as a medical technique**, should receive ***200 training classes.***

2.2 Research for the Standardization of Acupuncture is widely undertaken

- In 2006, China, Japan and South Korea, organized by WHO, framed “Standard for acupoints” which offers a standardized definition and description of acupoints.
- In 2007, China passed 11 national standards for acupuncture.
- China, Japan and South Korea are working on international standard for acupuncture.
- The introduction of acupuncture standard is bound to create more standardized climate for the international development of acupuncture medicine and makes further contribution to the development of acupuncture medicine.

2.3 Acupuncture is applied in a wider Scope

- Acupuncture is applied in a wider scope. For instance, the effects of acupuncture in treating motor nerve disease and pain are widely recognized by patients and medical personnel. On the basis of this, it is applied in a wider scope, including department of internal medicine, department of surgery, department of obstetrics and gynecology, and department of pediatrics. It is also applied in some emergencies, complicated diseases or a certain phase of complicated diseases, such as cancer, AIDS and diabetes.

- According to the research by several scholars from Tianjin, China, there are four disease spectra of acupuncture which total to 461 types.
- The Four Spectra include:
- Firstly, diseases which could be cured by acupuncture, such as peripheral facial paralysis;
- Secondly, major symptoms and physical signs can be relived by acupuncture but the fundamental causes of diseases cannot be completely eliminated;

- Thirdly, acupuncture cannot cure the fundamental causes of diseases but can relive some symptoms derived from disease, such as atrophic gastritis and acute appendicitis;
- Fourthly, the effects of acupuncture are not reliable, or there are new and effective treatments and acupuncture is seldom used. The former includes all kinds of cancer, pulmonary tuberculosis and gonorrhea. The latter is exemplified by malaria.

3. The Fundamental Guarantee of the Development of Acupuncture is to bring it into National Medical Health Care System

- 3.1 To bring acupuncture into national medical health care system is a basic requirement for member states in “2002-2005 traditional medicine strategy” by WHO. To protect and promote the development of acupuncture by law is the fundamental guarantee for the realization of Health for All project.

- 3.2 The fundamental guarantee for the support of acupuncture by government, academic circles and the masses is to bring acupuncture into national medical health care system and secure legal status of acupuncture in national health care program.
- 3.3 Only if acupuncture is brought into national medical health care system and acupuncture in clinical practice, research and education is legally protected, can the rights and interests of acupuncture practitioners be ensured and can the development of acupuncture be healthy.

- 3.4 Only if acupuncture is integrated into national medical health care system, can problems concerning the safety and efficiency of acupuncture, acupuncture practice permission, the establishment of educational system, and standards of acupuncture be properly solved.

4. Sincere Invitation

- Sponsored by ***WHO, Ministry of Health of the People's Republic of China and State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine of the People's Republic of China***, organized by four international organizations including WFAS, ***2008 WHO Congress on Traditional Medicine-Satellite Symposium on Acupuncture and Human Health*** will be held in Beijing from 7-9 in September. Entrusted by Ministry of Health of People's Republic of China and State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine of the People's Republic of China, in the name of president of WFAS, I sincerely invite government officials and acupuncturists from Brazil to attend this conference and visit WFAS headquarters located in Beijing.

中文版
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Thank you!