



Alternative Medicines Today

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Abbreviations: WHO: World Health Organization; UNESCO: United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization; CAM: Complementary and Alternative Medicines; SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Editorial

In this editorial i will talk about alternative medicines and how they can be important nowadays. CAM, complementary and alternative medicines are often also called integrative medicines since they are used combined with medicinal drugs: so to reduce and eliminate the use of chemicals and to establish a correct lifestyle.

Actually they are not the "alternative" to a proper medicinal remedy, but they are the original solution to every problem. Moreover they think that not only there are diseases with specific categories to which medicinal strategies are to apply, but that is the lifestyle to be the fundamental thing to work on to find health healing and empowerment. For these reasons the current empowerment and mindfulness are the modern side of those old teachings: awareness is the key to find better wellbeing.

The oldest alternative medicine we can find as science and not as mystic like sciamanic practices is AYURVEDA, the science of life, of wellbeing (starting 5000 years ago).

It is based on the seven chakra science: the first two chakras are sacral, then the third is abdominal center, the fourth is heart one, the fifth corresponds to neck thyroid and voice, the sixth and seventh are mental ones (one more brainy and the last more spiritual). These centers must contain and make circulate the same amount of energy each one: that's why for example we can get sick in an organ, since there is a stasis a knot of energy a lack or an excess in it. Other basis in ayurveda are the yoga and asana (breathing exercises) practice: stretching in certain positions helps us getting a right energy flux in the body-mind unity. Then there are the diet and herbals suggestions where for example curcuma and curry are the most used spice: tonifying and healing lots of dysfunctions. Also ayurvedic massage is studied by lots of practitioners and doctors. Mantra are the meditation formulas like the OHM: they are practices so to get mental peace.

What im really fond of is TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE: starting 4000 years ago, many texts are everyday found and newly translated. The basis are the five elements: wood, liver, gallbladder, tendons, angryness, hun (the dream soul); fire, heart, small intestine, vessels, happiness, shen (the mental and emotional soul); earth, spleen, stomach, muscles, metabolism, yi (intelligence); metal, lung, large intestine, zhi (memory); water, kidney, bladder, jealousy and fear, po (vegetative soul). These organs are the energetic centers in our body and there are some special ones like brain and uterus; the energy flows into meridians, small channels running unders the skin in the cou li space.

The qi jing shen are the three treasures: qi body energy, jing reproductive essence, shen the mental and spiritual energy. For tcm is not only important to recur to acupuncture when there are dysfunctions but also to live according right rules. The dysfunctions can be: deficit of qi, qi stasis, deficit of yin (with heat), deficit of yang (with cold), xue blood deficit or stasis, etc. The lifestyle tips are: practice qi gong, the outdoor openair fitness group practice, and eating according some rules. We have known that every food has a nature and can be considered neutral cold or hot in case it contains yin or yang energies: if we lack yang we should for example introduce peppers but not on the contrary. Zen is always important too: koan is a short paradox on which to meditate like reading sutra can help finding inner peace during the zazen practice; satori is the spiritual peace we always can find.

And nowadays? Nowadays these two sciences are great. Moreover i can say that cam can be considered also, toward pharmacological medicines:

a. Diet - diet should always be a daily routine; we should live on a diet. Mediterranean diet, categorized by Ancel Keys and since 2010 UNESCO heritage is made of: 1/week sweets and red meat; +/-week white meat or eggs or cheese or fish; 1/day cereals nuts; +/-day vegetables fruits water - a 2000 kcal/day diet is a rule and is also a human right.

- b. Fitness - like diet fitness acts on reward system, the dopaminergic pathways running from vta in midbrain until hypothalamus hypophysis limbic system insula basal ganglia amygdala and frontal lobes; fitness acts through endorphines on brain and snp and by NO the nitric oxid vasodilatating and perhaps by improving the SNAP the parasympathetic. Fitness is always a human duty since we should all have resting time from our activities to dedicate to workout.
- c. Mindfulness - as i said, it is great to meditate and do inner mind exercises to focus on what we have to solve and develop in us to improve and feel better. As i wrote meditation positively impacts on reward system so on our health and life.
- d. Affective life - greatly impacts on reward system, is fundamental to feel happy with partner and in family.
- e. Sleep - is also a human right, we should have time to sleep in good quality 7-9 hours per day.

Conclusion

In conclusion we can say that since for WHO health is not only the lack of illness but is a real wellbeing condition, a drug is not the solution, on the contrary we can find great healing strategies in alternative medicines the great pillar to our wellness.