Chinese Medicine
In Practice

The American Academy of Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine

AAAOM Opens Multiple Sclerosis Clinic

The American Academy of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine sent its first graduate, Lmain Neng Thao, to Shandong University of Traditional Chinese Medicine to study for his Ph.D. in Chinese medicine neurology in 2002. Mr. Thao returned three years later. With the extensive knowledge and skills he obtained in China, he is back at AAAOM to open the first acupuncture specialty clinic for multiple sclerosis patients.

Multiple sclerosis affects 2.5 million people worldwide, including 400,000 Americans. Very limited treatment options are available to help confront the symptoms of multiple sclerosis. Medical researchers continue their work to search for additional treatment options. One such option is acupuncture. Mr. Thao, with the help of Dr. Yubin Lu and Dr. Xiangdong Yu, has developed treatment protocols for multiple sclerosis patients. They carefully designed the treatment plans for patients in different categories following TCM principles. The patients will be treated twice a week. The course of treatment will be three months.

Join a 3 Month Study on the Effect of Acupuncture and Chinese Herbs on Multiple Sclerosis

Who: Anyone suffering from MS who is interested in trying acupuncture and Chinese herbal treatment

What: A study to determine the effect of acupuncture and Chinese herbs on Multiple Sclerosis

Why: This is a great chance to experience the power of Traditional Chinese Medicine at a nominal cost

Where: The Faculty Clinic of AAAOM in Roseville, MN

When: Tuesdays & Thursdays 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Cost: $15 per treatment (if paid in full at first appointment, receive a $20 discount)

How: Call 651-631-0204 to make an appointment and remember to bring your test results

For more articles and information, visit our website at: www.AAAOM.org
Inside AAAOM

Ongoing Accreditation

The Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine program at the American Academy of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (AAAOM) will be reviewed for its Master’s degree program in Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine next fall. The program gained candidacy status in the fall of 2001 and has been accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (ACAOM) since 2003. ACAOM is the recognized accrediting agency for the approval of programs preparing acupuncture and Oriental medicine practitioners. AAAOM faculty and administration have been engaged in the process of self-study, addressing the Commission requirements and criteria for accreditation, which include: curriculum, faculty, library, publications, administration, facility, student services, finance and other areas of significance.

Welcoming Our New Instructors

AAAOM witnessed extraordinary growth in the faculty in 2005. Dr. Xiangdong Yu, Dr. Daiyi Tang, Dr. Wen Jiang, Dr. Cui Han from China and Mr. Martin Kidwell joined the faculty team. Dr. Xiangdong Yu graduated from Shandong University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, received his Ph.D. from the China Academy of Traditional Chinese Medicine and was a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Neurology, Xuanwu Hospital in Beijing. Dr. Yu has worked as a physician and acupuncturist in the fourth Teaching Hospital of Shandong University of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Dr. Daiyi Tang graduated from Chengdu University of Traditional Chinese Medicine with both a Bachelor's and Master's Degree in Traditional Chinese Medicine. He attended Peking Union Medical College Hospital, China Academy of Medical Science and received his Ph.D. in integrated Chinese and Western medicine. Dr. Tang received direct advising from Dr. Zhu Chenyu, a famous contemporary Chinese medicine physician in China and the architect of the first TCM curriculum for Beijing University of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Dr. Wen Jiang received both her Bachelor’s and Master's degrees in acupuncture from Shandong University of Traditional Chinese Medicine and her Ph.D. in acupuncture from Tianjin College of Traditional Chinese Medicine. She followed Professor Shi Xuewu during her Ph.D. study, investigating classical needling techniques and a quantitative approach to needling techniques. She has been in acupuncture practice since 1992.

Dr. Cui Han received both her Bachelor's and Ph.D. in acupuncture from Beijing University of Traditional Chinese Medicine. She followed the famous acupuncture professor Li Xuewu while pursuing her Ph.D. in acupuncture. She has been an instructor and clinician at the Hospital affiliated with Beijing University of Traditional Chinese Medicine and South West College of Oriental Medicine in the United Kingdom since 1997. All four doctors have published extensively in acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine. The outstanding credentials of these faculty members are a significant factor in developing AAAOM into a first-class teaching and research institute of acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine and a huge plus for the acupuncture profession in Minnesota.

New Publications

More than thirty research papers and books have been published by the AAAOM faculty in the last academic year. These papers and books are in the fields of acupuncture points, needling techniques, Chinese herbs, herbal formulas, professional trends, as well as clinical research and applications. Written in English, these papers represent the highest level of skill and knowledge in acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine. They were published in leading journals such as Journal of Chinese Medicine, International Journal of Clinical Acupuncture, European Journal of Integrated Eastern and Western Medicine and American Journal of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Dr. Yubin Lu’s series on How to Learn Chinese Herbs continues to enjoy great popularity. Dr. Wen Jiang's series on classical needling techniques is a great addition for acupuncture practitioners. Dr. Cui Han's series on filiform needling techniques for difficult points filled a gap in English-language, TCM literature. And, Dr. Changzhen Gong's ten books on classical formulas are a great summary of the applications of classical formulas. The faculty at AAAOM continues to be a very productive team both scholarly and academically. They keep bringing the frontiers of Chinese medicine to the growing profession of Oriental medicine in the United States. These publications coupled with a highly qualified team of teachers and practitioners positions AAAOM as a leading education, services and research center in the field of acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine in the United States.

AAAOM Houses Acupuncture Journal

The International Journal of Clinical Acupuncture, founded in 1990, a forum for the English publication of original articles introducing to the world the latest developments of clinical acupuncture research, has been housed by the American Academy of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine since 2005. Dr. Daiyi Tang, Ph.D. serves as Editor-in-Chief. The journal is published quarterly. Most of the articles are from China and they report on diseases that are commonly seen in western acupuncture practice. Many of the studies involve large numbers of patients that researchers and practitioners in the West are not always able to see. Eastern treatment combined with western diagnosis can yield very valuable information to which western practitioners of Oriental medicine do not often have access. The International Journal of Clinical Acupuncture publishes articles under the following headings: acu-forum, clinical research, mechanism research, experience of famous specialists, needling technique research, acupuncture analgesia, and the adverse effects of acupuncture.
American Academy of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine

You are invited to attend our OPEN HOUSE
Sunday, November 13, 2005
2:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Highlights of the afternoon will include:
• Information Sessions about our Master’s Degree and Certificate Programs
• School Tours
• Tuina (TCM Massage) Presentation
• Visit our Library, Herbal Pharmacy and Student Clinic
• Answers to Your Questions
• Refreshments

To Register Please Call 651-631-0204
By Xiangdong Yu, TCMD, Ph.D.

The mechanism of treating disease in Traditional Chinese Medicine is different from that in western medicine. Western medicine focuses on the microcosm, or the local aspect, while treating disease. For example, when a patient has a headache, the head is treated and when a patient has pain in their feet, the feet are treated. On the other hand, TCM focuses on the macrocosm, or the general aspect, while treating disease. From the TCM point of view, the factors doing harm to the body, like bacteria, viruses, chemical toxins, wind damage, etc., are named pathogens and the factors that can benefit the body, like nutrition, vitamins, oxygen, blood, leucocytes, erythrocytes, antibodies, etc., are named vital Qi. If the vital Qi is strong enough, the pathogens have no way of entering the body. If the vital Qi is weak, the pathogens may enter the body, destroy the harmony of the body and a disease may ensue.

Western medicine focuses on eliminating pathogenic factors, studying every aspect of a disease, from the bacteria, viruses, tissues and organs to the molecules, cells, genes, DNA, etc. Each pathogenic factor and its pathogenesis is studied, in order to formulate the appropriate pain killer, antibiotic or pharmaceutical drug to treat it swiftly. The practice of TCM and acupuncture is more focused on strengthening the vital qi, emphasizing the importance of recovering or promoting the body's own resistance and immunity to disease as well as its self-healing power.

When an acupuncturist treats a disease, he first regulates the Qi and blood. The meridians and collaterals are the passageways through which the Qi and blood of the whole body circulate. The meridians and collaterals travel throughout the whole body, traversing the interior and exterior and the upper and lower parts of the body. Their physiological function is to transport Qi and blood, nourish the tissues and organs and regulate the balance and harmony between the tissues and organs. When the meridians and collaterals are blocked, the flow of Qi, blood and vital Qi will be affected, the pathogenic Qi will enter the body and the disease will occur. There are more than 360 acupuncture points along the meridians and collaterals. They are the key positions to regulate the meridians and collaterals and the flow of Qi and blood.

When needles are inserted into these points, the patient may feel a Qi sensation, such as soreness, numbness, tightness or heaviness. There may also be an autonomic nervous system response, such as accelerated blood circulation, an immune response, such as lymphocyte secretion or an endocrine response, such as endorphin release. Acupuncture can make the Qi and blood flow smoothly, strengthen the vital Qi, thereby strengthening the body's immunity, resistance and self-healing power. The disease will be cured naturally.

The mechanisms of acupuncture in the treatment of disease has been researched since 1958. Taking pain relief as an example, acupuncture stimulates the anti-pain system of the body. Research shows that this mechanism has a close relationship to the nervous system. When a point is punctured, the crude fibers of the nervous tissue are stimulated and the patient may have the sensation of soreness, numbness, heaviness and tightness. As the spinal cord receives the signal of pain, the crude fibers depress the activity of the small fibers which are in charge of transmitting the sensation of pain. This causes an obstruction in the transmission of the pain sensation to the brain, thereby relieving the pain sensation. The mechanism behind acupuncture's ability to relieve pain is also related to its ability to trigger the generation and secretion of analgesic substances in the brain.

The regulation of the neuroendocrine-immunological network is the primary mechanism behind acupuncture's effect. Many diseases have a relationship to dysfunctions of the neuroendocrine-immunological network, such as allergies, asthma, low immunologic function and neuromuscular diseases; and acupuncture is effective in treating such diseases. The effect may be related to a non-specific adjustment of the whole body, producing a marked effect through the neuroendocrine-immunological network.

Acupuncture can also treat diseases of various organs, by regulating and adjusting the activity of their physiology and pathology. According to the principles of neurobiology, this adjustment is related to the segments, inter-segments and spinal cord of the nervous system. Take the digestive system, for example. Needling ST 36
strengthen the gastrointestinal innervated neural segment, contract the stomach or relieve spasm and also stimulate the secretion of the endorphin enkephalin to reinforce the adjustment of gastro-intestinal function. Needling ST 36 and UB 21 (the back shu point of the large intestine) may regulate rectal peristalsis, thereby promoting a bowel movement in cases of constipation and stopping diarrhea in cases of diarrhea. And, needling GB 34 may contract the gallbladder and promote the discharge of bile.

The multidisciplinary cooperation in the research of the mechanisms of acupuncture treatment shows that acupuncture has a regulatory effect on organ function and it can strengthen resistance to disease. Pain relief research has converged at the study of nerve cells at the molecular level, electrophysiology and neurotransmitters such as enkephalin. These studies have shown that acupuncture can stimulate the secretion of natural pain-relieving substances in the body. There is often a delayed response to the acupuncture treatment; the pain relief may occur gradually and the effect may not be noticed until the needles are removed. The effect is strengthened with multiple treatments. In addition, acupuncture may also have an anti-inflammatory, anti-spasmodic, anti-shock and anti-paralysis effect.

Acupuncture in The News

Acupuncture found to lower elevations in blood pressure

Acupuncture treatments using low levels of electrical stimulation can lower elevations in blood pressure by as much as 50 percent, researchers at the Susan Samueli Center for Integrative Medicine at UC Irvine have found.

In tests on rats, the researchers found that electroacupuncture treatments provided temporary relief from the conditions that raise blood pressure during hypertensive states. Such treatments, they believe, potentially can become part of a therapeutic regimen for long-term care of hypertension and other cardiovascular ailments in people.

"This study suggests that acupuncture can be an excellent complement to other medical treatments, especially for those treating the cardiac system," said Dr. John C. Longhurst, director of the Samueli Center and study leader. "The Western world is waiting for a clear scientific basis for using acupuncture and we hope that this research ultimately will lead to the integration of ancient healing practices into modern medical treatment." The study appears in the March issue of the Journal of Applied Physiology.

Acupuncture Relieves Pain and Improves Function in Knee Osteoarthritis

Acupuncture provides pain relief and improves function for people with osteoarthritis of the knee and serves as an effective complement to standard care. This landmark study was funded by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) and the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases (NIAMS), both components of the National Institutes of Health. The findings of the study - the longest and largest randomized, controlled phase III clinical trial of acupuncture ever conducted - were published in the December 21, 2004, issue of the Annals of Internal Medicine.

The multi-site study team, including rheumatologists and licensed acupuncturists, enrolled 570 patients, aged 50 or older with osteoarthritis of the knee. Participants had significant pain in their knee the month before joining the study, but had never experienced acupuncture, had not had knee surgery in the previous 6 months, and had not used steroid or similar injections. Participants were randomly assigned to receive one of three treatments: acupuncture, sham acupuncture or participation in a control group that followed the Arthritis Foundation's self-help course for managing their condition. Patients continued to receive standard medical care from their primary physicians, including anti-inflammatory medications, such as COX-2 selective inhibitors, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and opioid pain relievers.

"For the first time, a clinical trial with sufficient rigor, size and duration has shown that acupuncture reduces the pain and functional impairment of osteoarthritis of the knee," said Stephen E. Straus, M.D., NCCAM Director. "These results also indicate that acupuncture can serve as an effective addition to a standard regimen of care and improve quality of life for knee osteoarthritis sufferers. NCCAM has been building a portfolio of basic and clinical research that is now revealing the power and promise of applying stringent research methods to ancient practices like acupuncture."

During the course of the study, led by Brian M. Berman, M.D., Director of the Center for Integrative Medicine and Professor of Family Medicine at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, Baltimore, Maryland, 190 patients received true acupuncture and 191 patients received sham acupuncture for 24 treatment sessions over 26 weeks. Sham acupuncture is a procedure designed to prevent patients from being able to detect if needles are actually inserted at treatment points. In both the sham and true acupuncture procedures, a screen prevented patients from seeing the knee treatment area and learning which treatment they received. In the education control group, 189 participants attended six, 2-hour group sessions over 12 weeks based on the Arthritis Foundation’s Arthritis Self-Help Course - a proven, effective model.
May I Have a Glass of Milk?

By Elise Garafola, MS, L.Ac., 2005

I would probably say: "That depends." A number of my patients are discouraged when I tell them to cut down on or eliminate dairy products, understandably so. That's why I thought I'd write this article.

Milk is an American institution. It's what people stock-up on if there's a storm coming. It's at the top of the shopping list along with bread. And, it's what most folks have for breakfast with their cold cereal. Cheese and other dairy products rank right up there with milk. The reason that milk is so highly regarded is that it is a very good source of calcium for "building strong bones and teeth." This very fact alone is why the federal government funds the school milk program. It's easier to get a child to drink a cup of milk than to eat a cup of collard greens, generally speaking. Not only is milk's calcium good for preventing osteoporosis but it is also indicated for preventing heart disease and cancer, as well. So, the federal government is on the milk wagon. The Food and Drug Administration "FDA", backed by the Dairy Council, has given dairy its own food group. We are told that 2-3 servings of dairy each day is necessary for a balanced, healthy diet. As a category, dairy includes milk, cheese, cream cheese, cottage cheese, sour cream, ice cream, butter, yogurt, etc. Keep in mind that the food pyramid is a man-made system for organizing nutrition, not a law of nature. So, if milk is so "good" for us why is it receiving bad press?

I began hearing about the problems associated with a high dairy diet when I developed rheumatoid arthritis in 1993. Both my chiropractor and my homeopath told me I had a "leaky gut" and could not tolerate the lactose in milk. Though I did not completely understand the terms they were using I was left with the impression that cow's milk was for cows, not humans. Moreover, when I followed their advice and stopped using dairy, I felt less pain and other negative symptoms were relieved.

In addition to my own experience, I have learned that the problem with cow's milk begins with the farmers. Probably for financial reasons, milk producers have fed and still try to get away with feeding animal by-products to cows. If you've paid attention to the news at all in the last couple of years, you'll know that this leads to mad cow disease. (PETA) Also, some cows consume growth hormone. Not all cows receive this and there is some dispute as to whether growth hormone affects humans or not. (Jilin) Regardless, there is still more to consider. The process of pasteurization uses high heat for a short period of time to kill bacteria. Logically, this is a good thing. It's just that this heating process changes the property of the milk making it more difficult to breakup during digestion from a Chinese point of view. (Jilin)

Lastly, milk gets homogenized. Homogenization takes the milk fat and breaks it into smaller particles in order to distribute it evenly throughout the batch. This reduces clumping of the milk fat so that each sip of milk is the same as the next. (Goff) Unfortunately, it also allows the small particles of milk fat to escape through the small intestine rather than stay for further digestion, causing leaky gut.

Clearly, there are benefits and/or dangers to dairy consumption. To analyze this further, I find that Chinese medicine looks at food from an altogether, refreshingly different point of view; sometimes in agreement with western thought and sometimes not; and most usually with varying reasons. In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), milk is sweet in taste, neutral by nature and is associated with lung and stomach function. That is, it helps moisten the lungs to promote absorption of oxygen and aids swallowing by calming the stomach to prevent nausea and vomiting. (Jilin) It is an animal by-product and thus very nourishing. (It has to be in order to help babies grow!) According to Chinese theory, the energy we need to function daily and to prosper comes from the air we breathe and the food we eat. When the human condition is extremely weak (lung disease - tuberculosis, or stomach disease - stomach flu, for example) raw milk is part of the suggested treatment to help the patient regain energy. According to Chinese medicine, that is the purpose of milk: helping the weak, frail, very young or old stay strong. Otherwise, it is so highly nutritious, difficult to digest, that it is not recommended as a daily (much less three times a day) food. The Chinese theory about food is that the heavier or creamier the food is, the more difficult it is to break it down. Organ meats (liver, tongue, kidneys and eggs) and dairy (milk, cheese, ice cream, yogurt, etc.) fit this category of nourishing, heavy foods. If one eats too much of these or eats them alone without high-enzyme foods or roughage, the digestive process can be injured allowing the heavy food to remain in the gut and create such symptoms as bloating, pain, gas, constipation, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, etc.

TCM often associates these symptoms with a disease condition called "dampness". Raw cow's milk, goat's milk, soy milk or any other kind of milk have similar properties in TCM. They are all whitish, creamy and nutritious and are prone to dampening. In moderation, this variety of milks can support life rather than debilitate it. However, if we consume three servings a day, every
day, we can expect some adverse symptoms in many cases. And, keep in mind that it's the processing of cow's milk that makes it even more difficult to digest and therefore more of a threat to the digestive function. Raw milk, on the other hand, is not exposed to high temperatures, nor is it de-clumped, so it is less likely to cause adverse digestive reactions. Because soy and rice milks are plant products, they are less fatty and have even been shown to benefit the gut by being able to drain dampness, keeping the digestive process moving smoothly. However, the rule-of-thumb is moderation and variety for beneficial health.

So, if you already have symptoms like those mentioned above, or a disease associated with the gut such as IBS, Crohn's, auto-immune dysfunction or food sensitivities/allergies, be cautious about all dairy products. And, if there is a family history of gut-related diseases you should visit your Chinese medicine practitioner to get some good dietary advice about your options to obtain calcium in your diet without over-indulging in foods that generate dampness. But, before you do I'll list a few:

**Foods equal to 1 cup of milk or cottage cheese:**
1 tin sardines with bones
1 cup bok choy
1 cup collard greens
1 cup mackerel
2/3 cup canned pink salmon with bones
8 oz baked beans
1 cup beet greens
1 cup broccoli
1 bean burrito
1 cup kale
1 cup mustard greens
1 cup okra
½ cup oysters
4 oz. Scallops
1 cup soybeans
4 oz. Tofu
1 cup turnip greens
-(Hausman, Benn Hurley)

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**Resources**
- Homogenization of Milk and Milk Products, Goff D University of Guelph, Canada 9/29/05 www.foodsci.uoguelph.ca/dairyedu/homogenization.html
- Mad Cow Disease Hits the Unites States, PETA 9/29/05 www.madtoeatmeat.com

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**Food as Medicine**

**Dr. Cheng Chi, TCMD**

Deep-fried spareribs are a popular and fun-to-eat food and quite easy to make. And, if you add some Chinese herbs, you will concoct a Chinese dietary therapy formula that is not only delicious, but a good treatment for blood deficiency and general body weakness.

This dish tonifies Qi and blood. It is very good for people who suffer from blood deficiency with symptoms such as fatigue and pale face, fingernails, lips and eyelids. Women, especially, tend to be prone to blood deficiency. If you or anyone in your family has these symptoms, this dish is an appropriate and delicious choice.

**Deep-fried Spareribs with Chinese Herbs**

**Ingredients**
1-1/3 lb. (600g) spareribs
10 g Dang Gui (Radix Angelica Sinensis)
5 g Chuan Xiong (Radix Ligustici Chuanxiong)
20 g Shu Di Huang (Radix Rehmanniae Glutinosae)
10 g Bai Shao Yao (Radix Paeoniae Lactiflorae)
5-10 pieces Da Zao (Fruitus Zizyphi Jujubae)
3T. sweet potato starch or cornstarch
Oil for deep-frying
1T cooking wine
1 T soy sauce
½ t. five-spice powder
2 t sugar
2 t vinegar
2 t minced garlic

**Method**
1. Add 1-2 cups of water to the Chinese herbs and cook for 20 minutes. Strain the herbal decoction (cooking liquid).
2. Soak the spareribs in the herbal decoction for 1 hour. Remove the spareribs from the decoction and coat with the sweet potato starch or cornstarch.
3. Heat the oil to 350° F and carefully drop in the spareribs. Fry until golden brown, 10-20 minutes. Remove the spareribs and drain on paper towels.
4. Mix the last 6 ingredients and briefly cook in a small pan, about 1 minute. Spread this mixture on the spareribs and serve.

**This Recipe Deconstructed**

**The Herbs:**
- Dang Gui - tonifies and invigorates blood; Chuan Xiong - invigorates blood and stops pain; Bai Shao Yao - tonifies blood, soothes the liver and stops pain; Shu Di Huang - tonifies blood; and Da Zao - tonifies Qi and blood

**The Herbal Formula:**
- Si Wu Tang - Four Materials Soup is a classic TCM formula to tonify blood.

**The Recipe:**
- The 5 herbs in this formula focus on tonifying blood and the spareribs tonify Qi. The combination tonifies Qi and blood.

**Note:** The Chinese herbs can be purchased in the AAAOM Clinic.
At your next acupuncture appointment, Chinese herbs may be prescribed to you. You will probably wonder how Chinese herbs are selected, how and why they are used and how they will work to treat your condition.

Almost all Chinese herbs come from nature and most are from plants. It is believed in Traditional Chinese Medicine that different plants grow in different regions and mature in different seasons, during which the yin and yang of nature are different. Furthermore, everything on earth depends on the support of heaven yang and earth yin to grow. Therefore, each herb is different due to the differing support of yin and yang in different regions during different seasons.

These various influences culminate in an herb's tastes and properties. The tastes, sour, bitter, sweet, pungent and salty, manifest from earth yin and the properties, cool, cold, warm and hot, manifest from heaven yang. Therefore, the tastes and properties of an herb are the basis from which to understand the functions of the herb. For example, Gui Zhi (Cinnamon Twig) is pungent and warm, so it can disperse pathogens (a pungent taste releases the exterior by inducing sweating) and expel cold (by way of its warm nature) and is used to treat exterior patterns due to wind cold, a version of the common cold.

Herbal therapy is one of the tools that TCM employs to correct the imbalances of the body, i.e. diseases. Like plants, the human body is also a unity of yin and yang. Health means that yin and yang are balanced, qi and blood are harmonious and the functional activities of the internal organs are normal; whereas disease is the result of an imbalance of yin and yang, a disturbance between qi and blood and the dysfunction of the internal organs. These pathological changes will manifest as different patterns such as excess, deficiency, cold, heat, etc. Therefore, we can use herbs of different tastes and properties to correct these imbalances and restore a patient's health.

Diseases are often complicated. One herb may have some effect, but it may be too strong, not strong enough or it may only treat the primary disharmony instead of all of the disharmonies. Therefore, we need to combine herbs to strengthen the effect, reduce side effects or to address the accompanying conditions. This is why TCM uses herbal formulas that contain, in most cases, many different herbs.

TCM is based on the diagnosis of patterns instead of diseases. A pattern is the result of both the disease itself and the patient's reaction to the disease, which is dependent on the patient's constitution. The most effective method to treat patterns in TCM is the oral administration of herbal decoctions, which enter the body by way of the gastrointestinal tract and restore the balance of the whole body.

Herbal formulas are constructed to treat specific patterns of disharmony, and because of the complex actions of the herbs, formulas work on the body very differently from medication. They may work in many different ways and on many different targets simultaneously; another important reason that it is generally stated that herbs are relatively safe and produce little or no side or toxic effects.

A good example of the complex demand of an herbal formula can be seen in the treatment of Meniere’s Syndrome. TCM believes that this disease is caused by water retention in the middle jiao (the spleen and stomach) which obstructs lucid yang (what is distilled from food and forms the basis of Qi and blood). To treat Meniere’s, we not only need to remove the retained water, but we also must warm and strengthen the spleen yang.

As you can see, Chinese herbs and herbal formulas have complex actions in the body and are very effective at treating many conditions. Furthermore, in comparison to pharmaceutical medicines, the side effects are much less, as they work on all aspects of the body simultaneously. It is also noteworthy that Chinese herbs are prescribed according to each person’s unique pattern, constitution and condition, unlike pharmaceuticals, which are prescribed according to the specific disease only. As this herbal prescription process is complex, it is important to seek the treatment and advice of a skilled practitioner.
Learning Chinese Herbs with Dr. Lu

As the main architect of AAAOM’s curriculum, Dr. Yubin Lu leads the teaching of Chinese medicine theory and Chinese herbal medicine courses. Dr. Lu received his medical training from the Shandong University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, as well as his Ph.D. and Master’s degrees of medicine. He has been an associate professor in the Department of Chinese Medicine at Shandong University of Traditional Chinese Medicine. His talented teaching style and tremendous knowledge of traditional Chinese medicine have attracted many acupuncture and TCM graduate students to his TCM theory and Chinese herbal medicine classes.

Dr. Lu, you have published six parts of your herbal story and you have received positive responses from many students of TCM around the country. And, the first part of your herbal story has been collected by the ABC (American Botanical Commission) for their database.

What motivated you to create these herbal stories?

When I began teaching herbology at AAAOM in 2000, I realized how difficult this class is for American students. They not only have to remember all the Chinese names of the herbs, but also their functions and applications. And although they can often memorize a category of herbs temporarily, long-term memory is very difficult. I decided there must be a better way to teach and promote the long-term memory retention of Chinese herbs.

I have found that with my herbal stories, I have made learning herbs much more fun and that they work as a pedagogical tool that requires much less of the students' energy to memorize the same amount of information. As herbal medicine is the most important therapy in the practice of Chinese medicine, I hope this will help students to become better trained practitioners.

How did you create the stories? And, how can they help students memorize the herbs?

Traditionally, the shape, color, weight, smell and taste of Chinese herbs are directly related to their properties and functions and, moreover, many herbs are named after their specific functions and/or properties. I tried to construct a bridge between the physical properties of the herbs and their interpreted functions so that students could establish a visual memory of each herb, thereby locking the herbs into their long-term memory.

Can you give some examples?

Take color as an example. Most herbs with a red color, such as Dan Shen, Hong Hua and Dai Zhe Shi, work on blood, since red is the color of blood. Most of the white herbs, either physically white or with white in their name, including Shi Gao, Bai Ji, Bai Mao Gen, Fu Ling, Tu Fu Ling, Ge Gen, Tian Hua Fen and Bai Zhi, function to treat Qi level conditions manifested as heat in the lung and stomach, to promote the production of body fluid or to remove dampness. Take the shape of herbs as another example. Most herbs from the vines of plants, including Ren Dong Teng, Hai Feng Teng and Qing Feng Teng, enter the meridians or collaterals and treat diseases of the meridians or collaterals such as Bi syndrome (arthritis). This is easy to remember as the meridians and collaterals run like vines throughout the body.

Can you give an example of one of your herbal stories?

Let's take Niu Xi as an example. If you look at this herb in the herbal pharmacy of an acupuncture clinic, you will see it is very similar to the legs of an ox. And, that is how it is aptly named. Oxen have been used to do heavy physical work, requiring that they have strong tendons, muscles and bones. Thus, Niu Xi can tonify the liver and kidney to strengthen the tendons and bones (the tissue structures relating to the liver and the kidney). Also, Xi means knees and this herb is better at strengthening the low back and knees. What is more, knees are located in the lower part of the body, so this herb tends to move downward with the function of inducing blood flowing downward.

Mu Dan Pi is another good example. If you look at this herb, you will see it looks much like a cross-section of a blood vessel with a white color. Its shape indicates that it works on blood, while the white color means it is cold in nature. So, Mu Dan Pi can clear heat (because of the white color) and it clears heat from blood (because of its shape). Furthermore, it moves blood since it takes the shape of blood vessels. Mu Dan Pi works at the blood level, which is located deep in the body and is therefore more yin. Therefore, it is also used to clear heat from the yin level in cases of yin deficiency.

It sounds as if this is a revolutionary change in the way of teaching and studying Chinese herbs. How many herbal stories have you created?

I have collected the stories of over 300 commonly used herbs. This includes almost all of the herbs required for clinical practice and the herbology portion of the national board examination.

If someone outside of AAAOM would like to have your herbal story, how can they access it?

There is an abbreviated version that covers many herbs that is divided into a series of articles published in The Journal of Chinese Medicine. They can also contact me directly to get a CD ROM.
A Trend Towards a Younger Student Body

The American Academy of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (AAAOM) has been educating health care providers since 1999. Over the past year, AAAOM has started to draw applicants immediately after college graduation. Of this year’s entering students, more than 50% had just completed their undergraduate education. This trend is starting to place AAAOM in direct competition with other health professional programs including western medical schools.

Since the beginning of Oriental medical/acupuncture education in the United States in the 1970’s, entering students frequently had already established careers in health care and other fields. Seven years ago, 42% of students enrolling at AAAOM already worked in health care and were pursuing acupuncture to augment their skills. They started additional training so that their patients and clients would benefit from a more holistic approach.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that enrollment demographics are also changing nationwide in this field. In the early years, most of the enrollments were by older, second-career students. The emerging trend is for younger enrollees who are seeking training in acupuncture and Oriental medicine as a first-career choice.

AAAOM President Changzhen Gong, Ph.D. said that most of the initial-career people seem to have their interest in acupuncture sparked as a result of a health crisis. "Their personal histories usually reflect a health condition that didn't improve until they tried acupuncture."

Second-career students come from a wide range of backgrounds. Dr. Gong says the most prevalent are massage therapists and nurses. "But the variety in professional backgrounds among the people who come our way is truly surprising. Some of our current students include a sociology professor and a computer programmer."

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Dr. Wei Liu
Doctor of Chinese Medicine
Acupuncturist (Lic.)
Nutritionist (Lic.)
Herbologist (Dipl.)

Dr. Li Gu
Doctor of Chinese Medicine
Professor
Acupuncturist (Lic.)
Herbologist

Dr. Xinrong He
Doctor of Chinese Medicine
Professor
Acupuncturist (Lic.)
Herbologist

Dr. Fei Xiao
Doctor of Chinese Medicine
Professor
Acupuncturist (Lic.)
Herbologist
AAAOM Alumni Get To The Point

POINT clinic, founded by Hongji Lee Bessler and Kathy Carey in January of 2005 has been open and in business since April of this year. Their passion in opening this practice was to provide affordable alternative health care in a beautiful environment for the Twin Cities area.

Q: What made you study Traditional Chinese Medicine?
A: It was in this medicine that we found help for our own personal illnesses.

Q: Did you know what you’d do after the program?
A: Kathy thought about being employed at HealthPartners where she has been an employee for many years. In the year 2000 when Hongji started the program at AAAOM and quit her profession to pursue TCM full time, she always had it in mind to set up a clinic. It wasn’t until the last trimester of our program that we combined forces to establish POINT.

Q: How did you choose each other?
A: The first time I saw Kathy was in the year 2000, in the waiting room of an acupuncture clinic in town. I remember we were the only two in the waiting room and I was thinking, "I wonder what she’s getting acupuncture for.” Soon after that, I saw Kathy again, this time at AAAOM where I was not yet a student; she was doing her first observation. Soon after that, I transferred to AAAOM where we ended up in all the same classes and lastly graduating together. We were both committed financially and mentally to take the leap.

Q: How did you come up with the name?
A: We wanted something simple. Since our target market was a younger demographic, we felt this name would create a space they’d want to explore.

Q: How did you come up with the decor ideas?
A: We wanted a comfortable atmosphere where people could lounge and not feel like they were awaiting a doctor’s appointment. We also watched HGTV religiously to get ideas -it was our nightly homework. A lot of our ideas came while standing in the middle of Home Depot scratching our heads.

Q: How do you advertise?
A: We have been fortunate to get ad space for affordable rates here and there, but we feel that it has not produced much result. Our awning has defiantly helped attract visitors and we are located on a busy intersection with a lot of street traffic. Be sure to check the traffic count of your location since visibility can be a key to your success.

Q: What has been the most difficult part of starting your practice?
A: The most challenging part was working with the city to comply with their regulations. We met with the community board members and some residents who had specific concerns, mostly regarding parking around the MacGroveland neighborhood as well as the city to propose our business idea in the neighborhood.

Q: Are you satisfied with your practice?
A: We feel extremely proud of our accomplishments from being students owning a business and we feel blessed to have the business that we’ve generated thus far.

Q: Any advice to students interested in opening a clinic?
A: Be genuinely interested in what people have to say. Patients are loyal if they can bond with you and will be glad to refer. Have set hours and stay there. Avoid only being open when you have someone scheduled. You can miss out on a lot of business this way. Have adequate finances, always learn more and network - we have gotten great deals and ideas from people we know!

POINT Acupuncture | Asian Medicine is located on 236 Cretin Avenue South on the intersection of Cretin and St. Clair in St. Paul. We welcome any students and visitors to stop by or give us a call at 651.699.2002.

New Graduate Clinics

With an increasing number of graduates from the AAAOM, new acupuncture clinics are mushrooming in Minnesota and eastern Wisconsin. AAAOM graduates show great confidence in their skills and knowledge in practicing acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine. The following is a partial list of the clinics opened or joined by AAAOM graduates:

- Imain Neng Thao: **TCM Traditional Chinese Medicine Clinic**, St. Paul, (651) 776-3243
- Amy Olson: **StillPoint**, Stillwater (651) 430-0018.
- Steve Tonsager and Gail Behr: **Flowing Rivers** , River Falls (715) 425-2677.
- Bonnie West: **Holistic Care with Fusion Lifespa**, Minnetonka (952) 345-3335.
- Hwa Choi: **Dr. Choi’s Acupuncture and Health Center**, St. Paul (651) 353-5960.
- Emily Schmitt: **Acupuncture Health Care**, Hopkins (952) 930-3633.
AAAOM Open House
The next Open House for prospective students will be held on Sunday, November 13 from 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. We hope to see you there!

First Day of Winter Trimester
The first day of classes of 2006’s Winter Trimester will be Monday, January 2. Applications are now being accepted and prospective students are encouraged to register early.

For application information, please call 651-631-0204.

Tai Chi and Healing Qigong Classes
AAAOM offers ongoing 10-week Healing Qigong classes on Saturdays from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm, beginning January 7, 2006 and 12-week Tai Chi classes on Wednesdays from 6:00 - 8:30 pm beginning January 4, 2006. For class and registration information, please call 651-631-0204.

AAAOM Continuing Education Seminars, 2006
January 28  Top Ten Acupuncture Points for Treating Gynecological Conditions, by Wen Jiang, Ph.D., TCMD
February 25 Sinusitis and Chinese Medicine Treatments, by Yubin Lu, Ph.D., TCMD
March 25  TCM Treatment for Parkinson's Disease, by Xiangdong Yu, Ph.D., TCMD
April 29  Acupuncture and Herbal Treatment for Diabetes, by Daiyi Tang, Ph.D., TCMD
May 27  Ingenious Cupping, by Fei Xiao, TCMD
June 24  Six Needle Technique Treating Cervical Vertebra Diseases (Theory and Practice), by Cheng Chi, TCMD
July 29  Filiform Needling Techniques on Abdomen Points, by Cui Han, Ph.D., TCMD

For seminar and registration information, please call 651-631-0204.