Leland Brenholt, AAAOM 2005, reads the pulse of a patient in his Tao Arts North clinic, which he established in downtown Hibbing in 2005. After making a complete Chinese medicine assessment and diagnosis, he performs an acupuncture treatment and prescribes some Chinese patent medicine. The patient really appreciates that Leland has brought Chinese medicine services to northern Minnesota. By locating his acupuncture clinic in a community on the Iron Range, Leland has seen his business growing steadily every week. "I have achieved half of my five-year plan in just under eight months," said Leland.

Karen Halverson, AAAOM 2004, moved to Hayward, Wisconsin, after she finished her Master's degree program in acupuncture and Oriental medicine in 2004. She built up her practice Acupuncture in the Woods. By providing first-class services to the Hayward community and neighboring communities, Karen sees up to sixty patients per week in the summer. She is very busy with her patient schedule. She is very happy with Acupuncture in the Woods. "When I came here I wasn't sure how receptive people would be to Chinese medicine; but people turned out to be very open-minded and appreciative, and I benefit greatly from word-of-mouth recommendations that my patients are kind enough to give," said Karen.

Imaim Neng Thao, AAAOM 2003, is the first student that AAAOM sent to China to study for his Ph.D. degree in Traditional Chinese Medicine. Altogether, Dr. Thao spent three and a half years studying at AAAOM and a further three and a half years studying in China. After obtaining his Ph.D., Dr. Thao immediately put all of his efforts into establishing his St. Paul practice, where he now has a patient base of forty patients in just three months. "I really appreciate what the doctors at AAAOM offered to me. They are the best professors and practitioners," said Dr. Thao. Following in Dr. Thao's footsteps, 2005 graduate Brian Grosam is currently attending Shandong University of Traditional Chinese Medicine for his Ph.D. in Chinese medicine. Brian has given us an idea of his experiences in an article he submitted to this newsletter.

Hwa Choi, AAAOM 2004, started the Chinese medicine program at AAAOM in 1999. After spending five years in the program as a part-time student and obtaining her Master's degree diploma, she established a private acupuncture practice two years ago in St. Paul, as well as being the director of acupuncture services at the University of Minnesota Veterinary Hospital. Both of Dr. Choi's practices are so busy that there is a waiting list for humans and animals that can stretch from a few days to a few weeks. "I can see as many patients as I want," said Dr. Choi.
You have to practice from your heart and you have to care. If your first focus is money, you won’t do as well. If your first focus is your clients, then your practice will grow. Put your energy and your focus on the clients and really be present with them. The money comes if you do your best. - Diane T Tanning, Acupuncture Works, St. Paul

There is a point in studying Chinese medicine when you think, ‘There’s nothing Chinese medicine can’t cure.’ This fills you with overwhelming confidence. Then you go into practice and find yourself saying, ‘Oh, there’s nothing Chinese medicine can cure.’ This fills you with overwhelming frustration. The best way to bridge this situation and gain perspective is to have mentors and teachers to turn to. Being able to turn to people with years of experience is a major support. My advice is to build good relationships with teachers and mentors in school and maintain those relationships after graduation. - Cary Hakam, Healing Waters, White Bear Lake

Work hard. Be patient. - Mercedes Summers, Acupuncture at Salon 61, White Bear Lake

Feel in your heart that you want to extend compassion and encouragement toward healing people and feel gratitude for those who seek you out to help them with their needs. - Hongji Lee Bessler, Point Acupuncture Asian Medicine, St. Paul

Last year, only a few months into my new practice, I was sharing some of my insecurities with my very wise massage therapist. Marge has a wealth of wisdom that goes beyond her depth of skills and knowledge of the body. Marge asked, "Do you believe in Chinese medicine?" I quickly replied, "Yes, of course!" She said, "Trust the work."

It was in that wise statement that I was reminded of the 5,000 years of history that was behind me. It would take me several lifetimes to learn all there is to know of TCM, but in this lifetime I can do my very best, with the experience and knowledge given to me through my teachers and the age-old texts available from the rich history of Chinese medicine.

Trust the work that you do. Trust the skills that you have. Trust that the people who need your skills will show up at your clinic door. Trust the work. - Amy Olson, Stillpoint, Stillwater, Minnesota

Photos from AAAOM’s first Alumni Reunion in August.
American Academy of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine

You are invited to attend our

OPEN HOUSE

Sunday, November 12, 2006
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

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651-631-0204
As an acupuncture service provider and Chinese medicine educator, the American Academy of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine continues to pursue excellence in TCM education and clinical services. Because AAAOM sees its own future success as being closely linked with its ability to serve community needs, it is pioneering in the area of specialty health clinics. AAAOM and its associated TCM Health Center clinics have developed four specialty clinics which provide unique services in acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine. A consideration in opening the specialty clinics was to concentrate services in those areas where TCM seems to have an advantage over standard western medicine in successful treatment. The 2,000-year history of Chinese medicine is a striking resource for the treatment of both common and complicated health conditions.

**TCM Dermatology Clinic**

Chinese medicine dermatology has been an established discipline for over a thousand years. Scientific research continues to be conducted in Chinese hospitals and universities in dermatology and all other areas of Chinese medicine. Effective treatment protocols for skin disorders are arrived at through pattern differentiation and accomplished by the modalities of internal herbal treatment, external herbal treatment and acupuncture. These therapies are either primary therapeutic treatment or are complimentary to western medicine treatment. Successful outcomes have been proved for a variety of skin conditions. Disorders that are effectively treated by acupuncture and Chinese medicine include eczema, psoriasis, dermatitis, urticaria, erythema, pruritus, vitiligo, herpes, melasma and alopecia.

The TCM Dermatology clinic is headed by Dr. Hong Chen. Dr. Chen received her Masters' degree in TCM gynecology from Chengdu University of Traditional Chinese medicine and her Ph.D. degree in Chinese medicine dermatology from Guangzhou University of Traditional Chinese Medicine. She has accumulated tremendous experience in treating gynecological conditions and dermatological disorders as a TCM medical practitioner, teacher and researcher. The TCM Dermatology Clinic is operated at the AAAOM facility in Roseville, MN.

**TCM Infertility Clinic**

The ability of Chinese medicine to treat infertility can be demonstrated by the historical record of Chinese population growth and fertility. Infertility has always been an area of special interest in Traditional Chinese Medicine. Now, modern scientific research is also validating the efficacy of acupuncture intervention in conditions ranging from miscarriage to IVF treatment.

Western infertility clinics are beginning to realize the benefits of acupuncture treatments before and after IVF treatment and in many instances are recommending acupuncture as part of their standard treatment process. This is one of the first areas where western medicine is beginning to accept and apply the combination of eastern and western medicine that is commonly practiced in China. Both female and male infertility conditions are very effectively treated by combining western medicine diagnosis and Chinese medicine pattern differentiation. TCM has a good track record of treating female infertility due to irregular periods, ovulatory dysfunction, polycystic ovarian syndrome, pelvic inflammatory disease, immune-based infertility and endometriosis. Male infertility issues which are treated by TCM include low sperm count, excessive dead sperm, non-liquefaction of semen and immune-based infertility. Most types of infertility are complex, and require a multi-faceted approach of acupuncture, Chinese herbal medicine and dietary therapy. In most cases, a multiple-stage approach with menstrual cycles is implemented for female patients to enhance the therapeutic effect and success rate.

The TCM Infertility Clinic is headed by Dr. Wei Liu, who trained as a Chinese medicine practitioner at Shandong University of Traditional Chinese Medicine in China and gained a degree in public health nutrition from the University of Minnesota. During her twenty years of experience as a TCM practitioner, she has helped several hundred couples to conceive healthy babies. The TCM Infertility Clinic is located at the TCM Health Center in Edina, MN.

**Multiple Sclerosis Clinic**

AAAOM’s MS clinic was initiated as a research project for Dr. Neng Thao's Ph.D. dissertation in Chinese medicine. Dr. Thao treated over forty multiple sclerosis patients during his study and
the majority of his patients experienced significant benefit from TCM treatment.

In terms of TCM diagnosis, MS is differentiated into patterns such as internally-generated phlegm heat, damp heat damaging the sinews, blood deficiency with wind hyperactivity, liver blood and kidney yin deficiency, qi and yin deficiency and kidney yang deficiency. The Chinese medicine treatment strategy is to control the symptoms, postpone development and prevent recurrence.

With the departure of Dr. Thao, supervision of the AAAOM Multiple Sclerosis Clinic was assumed by Dr. Xiangdong Yu, a Chinese medicine neurologist and by Robert Bleau, M.D. Both Dr. Yu and Dr. Bleau are faculty members at AAAOM. The MS clinic is operated by Juliana McCormick, a senior student intern at AAAOM.

IBS/Colitis Clinic
Traditional Chinese medicine modalities of acupuncture, Chinese herbal medicine and dietary therapy have proven very effective in the treatment and management of chronic gastroenterological conditions such as Ulcerative Colitis (UC) and Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS). The IBS/Colitis Clinic provides differentiated treatments to patients based on general body conditions, primary complaints, secondary complaints and examination of the pulse and tongue. IBS is differentiated into TCM patterns such as liver spleen disharmony, spleen and stomach deficiency, stagnated liver qi invading the spleen and spleen and kidney yang deficiency. UC is differentiated into Chinese medicine patterns such as damp heat in the large intestine, spleen and kidney yang deficiency, spleen and stomach qi deficiency, liver qi stagnation and spleen deficiency, blood and yin deficiency and blood stasis in the intestinal meridians.

The high success rate of treatments for IBS and UC by Chinese medicine has been well-documented in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) and in numerous Chinese medicine journals. Currently the IBS/Colitis Clinic is operated at the AAAOM facility in Roseville by Li Wang, L.Ac., Ph.D., and is directed by Dr. Yubin Lu, an expert in Chinese medicine gastroenterology and the Academic Dean of the American Academy of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine.

Treating IBS
By Li Wang, L.Ac., Ph.D., 2006

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) is a motility disorder involving the entire gastrointestinal tract, creating a complex of symptoms involving both the upper and lower GI tract. Predominant symptoms include variable degrees of abdominal pain, constipation or Diarrhea, and postprandial distention. The symptoms nearly always occur while awake and are usually triggered by stress or the ingestion of food.

There are two major types of IBS: the spastic colon type and the painless diarrhea type. In the spastic colon type, bowel movements are variable. Most patients have pain of a colonic origin over one or more areas of the colon associated with periodic constipation or diarrhea. The painless diarrhea group suffers from diarrhea, usually urgent, that occurs immediately upon rising or more typically, during or immediately after a meal.

In a 3:1 ratio, women are more commonly affected by IBS than men. No anatomic cause can be found. Emotional factors, diet, drugs and hormones may precipitate or aggravate a heightened sensitivity to GI motility.

Irritable Bowel Syndrome in Traditional Chinese Medicine:
IBS is curable and scientific research indicates that patients with IBS can get significant benefit from acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine. A randomized controlled trial [1] showed that the patients treated with Chinese herbal medicine had significant improvement without adverse effects as compared with the patients in the placebo group. Patients reported that the Chinese herbal treatment significantly reduced the degree to which IBS symptoms interfered with daily life. At the 14-week follow-up appointment, the improvement in symptoms that the IBS patients who took individualized Chinese herbal medicines experienced were maintained.

Case Study:
A 24 year old male complained about diarrhea and loose stools after each meal, with distending and cramping pain in the abdominal area for a long time. He had limited the amounts of dairy, sugar and wheat in his diet and felt better after the diet change. However, he still felt the pain and had diarrhea. He didn’t know what further kind of dietary restrictions could be incorporated. He had low energy and depression. His western doctor diagnosed him with IBS and depression.

On his first visit to the acupuncture clinic, he had a wiry pulse on the left and a weak pulse on the right. His tongue was pale-red with a thin white coating. After six acupuncture treatments he felt much better. Basically, he had no diarrhea and no pain in the abdominal area. He had more energy and felt happy. Then he abandoned his diet and ate five hamburgers in a week. As a result, he had abdominal bloating and his face broke out in acne. After two more treatments, he felt good again, without bloating or pain, and the acne was gone. Then with two further maintenance treatments (once per month), his digestive system was essentially normal.

A one-year follow-up showed that he could eat whatever he wanted without any digestive problems.

Building a Successful Practice in a Small Community

By Leila Nielsen

Karen Halverson is an AAAOM graduate with a busy acupuncture practice in the resort community of Hayward, Wisconsin. Karen has explored many avenues in her effort to establish and expand her practice, and she graciously shared her experiences in a recent interview. It is essential to note that every acupuncture practitioner has a unique mix of training, skills, talents and life experience. Two factors that are unique to Karen’s experience are that she is also an R.N. and that she has chosen to practice in a relatively small community. However, the point of this article is that every practitioner can use the essential building blocks to success, such as advertising, and tailor them to his or her own circumstances and abilities.

In the course of our conversation, there were five key elements that surfaced over and over again: the importance of planning your business strategy before opening your office; choosing the optimum location for your office; advertising, including outreach to community organizations; taking every opportunity to educate patients and potential clients; and providing high-quality TCM services with successful patient outcomes.

When Karen moved to Hayward, which has a medical complex consisting of a hospital and two clinics, she immediately began to make contacts with the existing medical community. Being an R.N. meant that she could communicate easily with the director of the Northwoods Community Health Center Clinic. The director was receptive to complementary medicine and offered Karen the use of an office and treatment room in the Northwoods clinic. Karen believes that being an R.N. also gave her more credibility with the community at large when she was establishing her practice, because people were more comfortable with the idea of “alternative” medicine when it was presented by someone who was already part of a familiar western medical environment. In the Northwoods clinic, Karen was positioned on an equal footing with the western medical services and could put a rack of TCM-related informational material and brochures in the lobby outside her office.

A major breakthrough came after her first three months of practice: Karen’s practice was featured in a front-page article in Four Seasons, a Hayward newspaper. Her business rapidly improved and she soon expanded to two, and then three, treatment rooms. Karen strongly believes in advertising, especially in the local papers that serve her target client base. She budgets advertising into her business expenses and runs ads in three local newspapers on a weekly basis, changing the copy regularly. The newspapers reach all of the small towns within an hour’s drive of Hayward and some of Karen’s patients will drive 45 minutes to an hour to see her.

Being creative, Karen found several other opportunities for advertisement and education. After being interviewed by the local public radio station WOJB, she went on to sponsor two health-related programs on that station. She joined the Hayward Chamber of Commerce, which enabled her to place her business brochures at the tourist information office in town. One of Karen’s clients happened to be an R.N. specializing in diabetes education and she invited Karen to speak to the diabetes group. Karen was also invited to speak at the Hayward hospital “grand rounds” and is now scheduled on a yearly basis to give a lecture on TCM to physicians and nurses.

Karen emphasizes that, especially in smaller communities, word-of-mouth is one of the most potent factors in building a business. When clients receive effective treatment of their health problems, they quickly spread the word around the community. That is why Karen is such a strong advocate of the educational process and takes every opportunity to increase knowledge about the purpose and benefits of Chinese medicine with her clients and with any group that she can address. She is also conscientious about thanking anyone who gives her a referral and if the referral comes from a medical practitioner, she makes a point of communicating with the referring practitioner.

Setting up a practice can be a daunting experience. Planning all the details of your future practice ahead of time is the best way to minimize anxiety and avoid unexpected hurdles. Karen took Honora Wolfe’s management seminar and then applied everything she learned there about setting goals and pre-planning every business detail when she set up her own practice. Thinking her plan-of-action out ahead of time made Karen more comfortable with the entire process of establishing her business and she strongly recommends this approach.

The ultimate key to having a successful practice, of course, is to have a lot of patients who have had successful results and are happy to spread the word that you are a great practitioner. Karen is an inspirational example of someone who has taken her education, her skills and her potential and made the most of everything she has.
Migraine Study

A migraine headache research study will begin soon at AAAOM. Dave Saum, 2006, and Amy Krause-Reader, 2006, graduate interns at AAAOM, will treat patients suffering from chronic migraine headaches to study the effects of TCM on relieving this condition.

Migraine headaches are a common malady in our culture, often debilitating to the patient. The western treatments for migraines are pharmaceutical, with a host of side-effects, some unpleasant, some serious. The treatment is also inconsistent in its effectiveness, leaving patients frustrated with their condition. Western treatment seems to be reactive - you take the medicine when you get the migraine - and sometimes it doesn’t work.

TCM has traditionally had good success treating all types of headaches, especially migraines. Patients usually have some associated symptoms such as nausea, irritability, insomnia, depression and dry eyes and throat to go with their migraines. Chinese medicine addresses the whole condition of the patient and treats these symptoms as well. TCM treats the root of the problem so that patients can expect a reduction in frequency, duration and intensity of their headaches. Some are even completely cured.

A recent case treated here brought the following results: Patient D, male, age 35, suffered from weekly migraines for over 20 years. Western medications had proved inconsistent, so he turned to acupuncture. After a short series of treatments supplemented with herbal formulae, Patient D reports only one headache in the last four months, which occurred at the beginning of treatment. Patient D also reports that he has resumed a more normal lifestyle and that the environment and his diet do not seem to be the causative factors for migraines that they were previously.

The clinical study will be conducted on Wednesdays from 1-8 PM and Saturday mornings from 8:30-12:30. If you know anyone with chronic migraines, have them call for an appointment now.

Food as Medicine

By Cheng Chi, TCMD

Shuang Er Chao Dan: Stir-Fried White Fungus and Wood Ear with Eggs and Shrimp

Ingredients:
- Pre-softened white fungus: 100 grams
- Pre-softened wood ears: 100 grams
- Dried shrimp: 1 Tablespoon
- Eggs: 3
- Fresh coriander: 2 Tablespoons
- Green onion: 1 Tablespoon
- Salt: ¼ Tablespoon
- Water: 2 Tablespoons

Preparation:
1. Remove stems from wood ears and white fungus, wash and soak for 4 hours.
2. Rinse shrimp and clean briefly.
4. Heat 3 Tablespoons cooking oil and stir-fry eggs until almost solidified; remove from heat.
5. Heat 1 ½ Tablespoons cooking oil and stir-fry shrimp until fragrant.
6. Mix wood ears and white fungus, fried eggs and shrimp together. Stir-fry with the remaining ingredients over high heat for 2 minutes.

7 Servings

TCM Functions: Tonifies qi and yin; stops bleeding; moistens lung.

Indications: For treating chronic cough, bleeding cough, dry mouth, thirst, night sweats, seminal emissions, bleeding in the lung or stomach and hemorrhoids.

TCM Properties:
- **Black wood ear** is classified as sweet and neutral. It tonifies the lung, cools blood and stops bleeding. It is very good for bleeding in internal organs such as the stomach, small intestine, large intestine, urinary bladder and lung.
- **White fungus** is classified as sweet, bland and cool. It tonifies yin, moistens the lung and increases stomach yin and body fluids. It is very good for cough due to deficiency, bleeding lungs, seminal emissions and night sweats.
- **Shrimp** has a warm property. It tonifies kidney yang and qi and it is very good for increasing qi and general body energy.
- **Eggs** are neutral and tonify qi and blood. They are a very good food for increasing overall energy.

Together, the above four ingredients are not only delicious, but also increase Yin and overall energy.

Note: The Chinese herbs can be purchased in the AAAOM Clinic.
My wife and I and our two boys have been living in Jinan, China for six months now and it is nothing like we imagined. So far, it has been the most difficult and the most exhilarating experience of our lives. Every day here, we have challenges, realizations, problems or obstacles that require our full attention. For example, there is the culture shock and the great trouble of ordering food in a restaurant without speaking the language or being able to read a menu. Another challenge is the day and a half of traveling back and forth between different government buildings and bureaus to secure our family's visas. Some days, when the challenges and difficulties seemed overwhelming, my family would have taken a "Plan B" option (if we had one) to get our old life back. Dr. Lu asked me to share my thoughts and experiences of living in China. I thought you would enjoy it most if I shared with you the "perfect day" of what it is like to live and study in China.

I wake at 5 am every morning, tired from late-night studying and prepare for my day. I pack my bag with books, a Chinese-English dictionary and daily necessities. I grab my travel mug filled with green tea and hike off to the mountain by 5:30. The streets are empty of cars and I can walk down the middle of the road. Thousand Buddha Mountain hovers over the southern part of Jinan and is a 10-minute walk from our apartment. There, in the morning, you can catch a true glimpse into a unique aspect of the Chinese culture. As the sun rises, a great many people, young and old, men and women, file through the gateways. There you can see people hiking the vast trails through the trees or friends strolling along the stone pathways talking about their family. You can see people exercising, dancing, laughing, calling out at the top of their lungs, flying kites, writing calligraphy, playing instruments, hanging their birds in cages to sing and to relax or meditate. I come to practice tai chi with Master Zhang, whom I was introduced to by Neng Thao. This once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to learn tai chi from a great master is energizing, blissful and relaxing.

It is a ten-minute bus ride from the university to the Shandong Traditional Chinese Medicine Hospital where I need to be by 8 am for my internship. I take the elevator to the 5th floor, the acupuncture department, where I, along with 3 master's degree students, assist and follow Dr. Shan. On any given day, I observe the treatment of around 30-50 patients. I have seen many interesting cases including a few unique pediatric cases involving poor physical and mental development. The regularly-seen acupuncture treatments are for hemiplegia, stroke, neck, leg, knee and back pain, Bell's palsy and trigeminal neuralgia. Doctor Shan performs the main acupuncture and students finish the complementary needling and the withdrawing of the needles. Right now, I still mostly watch, take notes and ask questions. It has taken time to settle into and feel comfortable in this fast-paced setting. My new classmates are fun, kind and highly educated and well trained in acupuncture. After the last patient is finished, electro-stimulator machines are put away and used needles are prepped for sterilization. My four-hour shift at the hospital is done.

A little after 7 am, I leave the mountain and stroll down a once-vacant, now very busy local street to buy myself breakfast from one of the numerous vendors selling some of the most delicious foods your lips will ever touch. Most days, I buy a local favorite called "shaobing" - a roll stuffed with eggs, vegetables and meat - and eat as I make my way to the university bus stop.

The Chinese language has proven more difficult to learn than I anticipated, for it takes constant review, reading, writing and practice. My language skills are improving, slowly, day by day. Right now, my goal is to improve my language skills and deepen my medical vocabulary so I am able to communicate at a higher level both in classes and at the hospital. My medical classes begin later this term. I have many classes to complete in the next two years including advanced acupuncture, neurology, "The Spiritual Pivot," and acupuncture anatomy.

When class is finished, I am usually very tired. After a twenty-minute walk uphill, I am back home, where I get to enjoy time with my family, prepare dinner and study into the night. Does this sound too good to be true?
Developing My Practice
*By Elise Garafola, M.S., L.Ac., 2005*

AAAOM equipped me well with the rudimentary knowledge needed to begin a practice in Traditional Chinese Medicine. I have a total of five years experience, if we count my graduate internship. During that time my patients have had varying but mostly positive results from treatment using the protocols I learned in school.

In the last year I experienced the Balance Method by Dr. Tan. Dr. Tan has spent years researching, testing and documenting his use of TCM from a meridian point of view. He states, "Where there is stagnation of Qi and Blood there will eventually be pain." His use of meridian theory, shu points, the Chinese clock and mirror imaging have led to a highly successful, user-friendly method of treating pain as well as systemic imbalance. Two of his simply written books contain lists and descriptions of special points and how to think through the treatment plan for relieving pain. A third book includes the treatment of other conditions such as insomnia and other non-pain related imbalances. All of his books include multiple case studies that provide greater insight and direction for real-life conditions.

I enjoy using this method because my patients receive clear results with each treatment. They come in with pain and leave without. They come in anxious and leave calm. One aspect of this method often includes frequent visits multiple times per week. Some patients might find this cost-prohibitive. My solution is to charge one fee for the first visit of the week and allow additional visits at no charge. As the patient's condition balances, their visits are less frequent. To allow for a high volume of patients, I have three treatment areas, allowing for three patients per hour if necessary. My fee structure may be controversial to some as poor business or encouraging misuse but I think differently. If the patient can afford the initial fee, I can afford to treat them as often as needed to get the results we both expect. Besides, I have enough space to allow for this. Ultimately, my practice is patient-centered. It is focused on helping people find relief from pain and imbalance. As a result, I have received positive feedback and appreciation in the form of referrals and my practice provides me with a part-time career, the ability to pay off my loans, build a modest savings and spend time with family. With the high cost of western medical care that masks symptoms and creates side effects, TCM can provide a refreshing alternative: results at a reasonable price. For more information about the Balance Method Dr. Tan’s website is: www.drtanshow.com

*Elise Garafola is a graduate of AAAOM and practices out of the Abeler Chiropractic Clinic in Anoka, MN. You may reach her at (763) 421-3722*
AAAOM Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Hong Chen

By Leila Nielsen

The newest addition to the AAAOM faculty, Dr. Hong Chen, has an extensive background in TCM studies, with a Master's degree in TCM gynecology and a Ph.D. in TCM Dermatology.

L.N.: Why did you decide to study TCM?

Dr. Chen: My grandfather was a famous TCM doctor. He influenced me a lot. His name was Dr. Rongbin Xiao and he had his own clinic in Sichuan Province. I admired him so much because he treated everybody that came to his clinic, rich and poor. Because he was well-known, people would come from all over to see him, like generals and government administrators, but he also gave free herbs to the poor people. We lived with him when I was little and I would help him in his herbal pharmacy. He made his own pills, syrups, plasters and everything else and he taught me how to help him.

L.N.: You studied for your Master’s degree in gynecology at Chengdu University of TCM. What was your focus there?

Dr. Chen: I was lucky to study at Chengdu, which has an outstanding program in gynecology. While I was there, I was on a team of doctors and researchers that developed an herbal formula that addresses vaginal dryness in perimenopausal women. It is taken orally and it did so well in the clinical trials that it is now in production in China.

L.N.: Why did you switch from gynecology to dermatology for your Ph.D. studies?

Dr. Chen: I did not see it as a complete change. There are many aspects of gynecology that have a connection to dermatology, such as vaginal dryness, vaginal inflammation leading to infertility and STDs. Perimenopausal women often have dermatitis or other skin disorders. I was interested to connect dermatology and gynecology in this crossover area.

L.N.: What was your experience at Guangzhou University of TCM?

Dr. Chen: Again, I was lucky to be able to study at Guangzhou - it is one of the best universities in China and the area around there is very beautiful. I was very busy there. I treated approximately 60 patients every day at the Guangdong Hospital of TCM, taught medical students and did research. My Ph.D. research was in systemic lupus erythematosus. Right now, there is no cure for lupus. At Guangdong, we used acupuncture and herbal formulas to treat the symptoms and improve the quality of life for people with lupus. Our patients did better than those who used only western drugs to treat their disease.

L.N.: Is Minnesota the first place you’ve lived in the States?

Dr. Chen: No. I was part of a research team at N.Y.U. before I came here. We were doing basic research on the active ingredients in two Chinese herbs - Tian Ma and Chuan Xiong. It was interesting to work there and they had good lab equipment, but I decided to come here when I had the opportunity.

L.N.: What appealed to you about working at AAAOM?

Dr. Chen: I feel that I have a chance to reach my goals at AAAOM. At N.Y.U. I was only involved in research. But I am a clinical doctor, a teacher and a researcher. My goal is to combine all of these things together and contribute to the field of Chinese medicine. AAAOM is a perfect place to do this. Here, I can work the way I did in China. But I can do another thing in this country, which is to tell Americans about Chinese medicine and how good it is. Chinese medicine is so safe and effective for so many health problems - I want everyone to know about that.

L.N.: What do you like to do when you’re not working?

Dr. Chen: I have studied Tai Chi for years and am pretty good at it. Tai Chi and dancing are my favorite forms of exercise.

Bob Flaws Speaks on Treating Infertility with Chinese Medicine at AAAOM

On October 8, Bob Flaws lectured to a group of 50 in one of AAAOM’s new classrooms.
Pursuing My Life’s Path in China

By Neng Thao

I wanted to study in China ever since my first day in TCM school. Chinese culture, philosophy and Traditional Chinese Medicine had been an inspiration to me for many years. At the beginning of the first semester at AAAOM, many of us students were talking about continuing our advanced studies in China. We were very excited that after graduating from AAAOM, we had the option to go to China to do our Ph.D. studies at Shandong University of TCM. By the end of my first year at AAAOM, I had already decided that studying in China would be my next step. From that moment, my wife, kids and I started planning for my three-year course of study in China, not to mention our lives there. Finally, in December, 2002, I graduated from AAAOM and passed my NCCAOM exams. In March, 2003 I went to China to continue my studies.

Most of the terms, philosophy, ideas and theory behind Traditional Chinese Medicine are based in Chinese culture. To understand them is to understand the culture. I knew that I couldn’t achieve this dream in the States. And, for me personally to understand a culture, I have to live in it and experience it. I can’t just read about it in a book.

To understand a foreign culture, first you have to learn their language and that is what I did. I’m fluent in Hmong, Lao, Thai and English. My Chinese is good and I even speak a little Spanish. Of all of these languages, Chinese is the most difficult, especially the written part. Therefore, learning the Chinese language was the most difficult part of my studies in China. It took me six months to be able to get around without a translator. And, in order to recognize and remember how to write the Chinese characters I would write each new character 100 times or more.

Reading a lot and looking up unrecognized words in the English translation was the best way for me to practice my reading skills. First I started by reading easier Chinese medicine books that were written specifically for foreigners. And later, I went on to the more difficult texts, including the classical texts. Almost every day during the first year, I spent four to six hours reading and looking up words in the Chinese-English dictionary. One time I spent eight hours at it and just got ten lines translated.

I was often homesick, but found that practicing Tai Ji was the best remedy. I was fortunate to find a very good and famous Chen-style Tai Ji master, Master Zhang Cong Zhong. He was a little skinny guy, 56 years old, but stronger than any young man I have ever known. He could hold you by one finger and you couldn’t escape. And, you could push him with all your might and he stood firm.

In China I was able to practice and observe many traditional techniques of TCM treatment that we do not see here, such as scaring moxa, embedded needles, spinal adjustments by a Tuina master and point injection. I was most influenced by the combined use of TCM and western medicine in the hospital setting. For example, a stroke patient would request an acupuncture treatment once everyday while he was in the hospital. Or, a surgeon would request an acupuncturist to come and give his patients treatment once everyday to help accelerate tissue healing. Cancer patients also recovered faster from chemotherapy by using Chinese herbs. It would be a great benefit to our medical system here in the United States if we could accomplish such an integration of two powerful medical systems. I believe that all of us as health care professionals want the best medicine for our patients. When I say "the best," I mean the treatment which is best for the patient’s condition at any given time.

This could be western medicine, eastern medicine, a combination of the two, or even three or four different modalities - whatever is the most suitable. Integration is truly the best medicine.

In China, I did my Ph.D. research on treating multiple sclerosis (MS) with TCM. I combined the use of acupuncture, herbs and tuina to treat MS, using TCM pattern differentiation. Based on my research, I found that even three months of treatment is a relatively short time for such a chronic and difficult-to-treat disease. However, TCM does help greatly to relieve many MS symptoms such as pain, fatigue, trouble with balance, mood swings and bowel trouble. Even though a lot of research has been done in China on the use of TCM to treat MS, we still have little to no such research here. As I completed my research project, I felt very confident that TCM should be included as a very important part of MS treatment. And, now that I’m back in the States and have opened up my own practice, I still see a few MS patients regularly.

Continuing to make TCM more effective for MS patients and the public in general is my professional goal. I know that this will require a lot of time and energy, both personally and as a profession. I’m confident that we will be successful in this endeavor, if for no other reason than that TCM really works.
Dates to Remember

AAAOM Open House
The next Open House for prospective students will be held on Sunday, November 12, from 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. We hope to see you there!

First Day of Fall Trimester
The first day of classes of 2007’s Winter Trimester will be Tuesday, 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 6, 2007 and 12-week Tai Chi classes on Wednesdays from 6:00 - 8:30 pm beginning January 3, 2007. For class and registration information, please call 651-631-0204.

AAAOM Continuing Education Seminars, 2006 & 2007

November 18  TCM Treatment for Diabetes and Its Complications, by Daiyi Tang, Ph.D., TCMD
December 30  Top Ten Acupuncture Points in TCM Gynecology, by Wen Jiang, Ph.D., TCMD
January 27, 2007  Top Ten Formulas in TCM Dermatology, by Hong Chen, Ph.D., TCMD
February 24, 2007  Five Essential Elements in Acupuncture Practice, by Li Gu, TCMD, Senior Acupuncturist
March 31, 2007  TCM Treatment for Peripheral Nerve Disorders, by Xiangdong Yu, Ph.D., TCMD

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