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Chinese International Students' perception of health and wellbeing regarding TCM

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This study explored Chinese international students' perceptions of health and wellbeing in relation to the attitude towards and use of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). The perceptions were identified from three aspects: social perceptions concerning with individuals' daily interactions with others; environmental perceptions dealing with individuals functioning effectively in their physical environment; and psychological perceptions centring round individual characteristics related to a person's well-being in society. The qualitative data from individual and focus group interviews in this study revealed that Confucianism has greatly shaped the social and psychological perceptions and the way in which health, wellbeing, and treatment are conceptualised and practiced. Taoism dominates environmental perceptions of health and wellbeing with the theory of naturalism, emphasizing the impact of environmental factors on disease. Data analysis illustrated that the reasons that Chinese international students used TCM to cope with the adjustments are: problems that cannot be cured in Western medicine (WM), recommendation from friends and relatives, habitual action inherited from families and being familiar with the Chinese approach to illness. The reasons for not using TCM are listed as the high cost, lack of information about TCM clinics, inconsistency of practitioners' professional levels, the length of curing illness, the inconvenience to consume the herbs and disclosure of clinical secrets. These factors are discussed with reference to literature review, and suggestions and recommendations are put forward.

Biography

Dongshuo is currently a PhD student in Health Research at Lancaster University. She received Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) training in Fujian TCM University, and BA in intercultural communication and MSc in Research Methodology at the University of Manchester. She is the Co-founder of the TCM Clinic at the University of Manchester where staff and students with stress can be treated. She has been researching and developing TCM in the west, and has given talks in China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences, Oxford University, and Manchester University etc., and has published a dozen papers in journals and as book chapters.

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