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Tai chi and CVD (Cardiovascular Disease)

David A Hruodbeorth^{1,2}¹Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo, Brazil²Salesian University Center of São Paulo, Brazil

According to the WHO, the rise of non-communicable diseases is an impending disaster, disaster for health, for society and for national economies, an enormous challenge that ever more sophisticated and costly medicines, devices, and technologies will not be able to save the situation. Cardiovascular disease, one of the NCDs, is the leading cause of death and disability in the world. The estimated cost of CVD will be \$1,044 billion by 2030. Although pharmacological therapy be strongly recommended, non-pharmacological approaches and lifestyle modifications continue to be recognized for both primary and secondary prevention of CVD. According to WHO, traditional Chinese medicine pioneered interventions such as diet, exercise, awareness of environmental influences on health, and the use of herbal remedies as part of a holistic approach to health. Tai chi, one of the techniques of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), although very young in the west, has more than 700 peer-reviewed, scientific publications in print, more than 180 randomized trials conducted and may offer patients additional options, whether as an adjunct to formal cardiac rehabilitation, as a part of maintenance therapy. The physical activity of tai chi ranges between 1.6 and 4.6 METS (metabolic equivalents) and impacts key risk factors, including cholesterol levels, blood sugar metabolism and inflammation. Randomized controlled trials (RCTs) including hypertensive patients, reported a positive effect on blood pressure. Whereas TLC (Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes), tai chi approach also includes chronobiology of Chinese medicine. We endorse Dr. Margareth Chan, at WHO Congress on Traditional Medicine, the time has never been better, and the reasons never greater, for giving traditional medicine its proper place in addressing the many ills that face all our modern – and our traditional – societies.

david09hrudbeorth@gmail.com