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The role of Chinese medicine as part of an integrated model in maternal health clinics

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As a Chinese medicine practitioner, birth assistant (Doula) and birth educator I work in tandem with general practitioners at a family health clinic and at an OB-GYN clinic. At these clinics, we see ourselves as part of a global movement that believes in continuity of care throughout the patient's life cycle. As part of complete and holistic healthcare approach, complementary care strives to help women reach the balance that will help them believe in their bodies and their ability to give birth. Chinese medicine serves as a leading tool in our clinics, helping women experience pregnancy and childbirth as an opportunity to enhance their acquaintance with their bodies, rather than focus on the pathological elements of the pregnancy and childbirth cycles. Our focus is on helping women reclaim their bodies, reclaim their knowing of what's right for them, we therefore provide care and advice for the women starting as early as the stage of planning a pregnancy, through navigating the pregnancy journey, labour itself and the post-natal period. My lecture will focus on our role of care during pregnancy as Chinese medicine practitioners. We will look at the three trimesters and emphasize the physiology-based care which means, for me, trust, learning to really listen, intervene only when necessary while providing a safe haven of attentive care. We will talk about healthy vs. alarming symptoms and our way of assisting. The emphasis skill and art of consolation for this lecture will be Moxibustion, a safe, elegant, mild and very effective tool of tonifying acupuncture points. One we can also teach our patients to take-out for on-going relief and self-trust. Medical benevolence is based on relationships, the crossroads between the individual and the elements within her, on continuity of care, on reliability. These elements of balance between growth and decline, nourishment and control are the core of Chinese medicine. In line with that, my approach to feminine health is all about the private experience of trust in oneself and hopefully others, the strength of choice.

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