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Holistic healthcare for gracious aging

With the increase in aging population, geriatric healthcare is becoming a critical issue at present. Conventional medicine addresses the chronic aging syndromes by prescribing different long term medicines to control various abnormal bio-medical indicators. Traditional and Complementary Medicines (T&CM) contain ancient wisdoms capable of addressing geriatric syndromes from a different perspective. According to TCM principles, 'Prenatal Essence' inherited at birth will deplete gradually with age. Nutritional intakes after birth will build up 'Postnatal Essence' to form blood, fluid, hormone, etc. All pre- and postnatal essence belongs to 'Yin' which will be activated by energy to perform metabolic functions. The energy is a form of 'Qi', which is categorized as 'Yang' in TCM. An individual will remain healthy by maintaining a dynamic balance of Yin and Yang. Typically, the aging process will involve the depletion of the prenatal essence, a decline in energy level (Qi deficiency), lower nutritional intake and slowness in body metabolism. To maintain good health, one has to find ways to replenish the prenatal and postnatal essence and to strength Qi to increase energy level. These replenishments can be done with Chinese medicine and acupuncture and also food therapy. Another aspect of geriatric healthcare is physical exercise. Studies have shown that after practicing Qigong (TCM fitness exercises), participants showed significant improvements in physical capability, metabolic indexes, weight reduction and improvement in overall health. Besides physical health, emotional wellbeing is an important factor in holistic geriatric care. Negative emotions will impact TCM visceral systems, resulting in the blockage of energy flow (Qi stagnation), leading to complex structural disorders including the formation of bumps and tumors. To achieve good emotional health, TCM stresses the importance of living with law of nature and maintaining social harmony to achieve Yin-Yang balance in the visceral systems. In a nutshell, TCM recognizes that aging is a natural process which can be managed holistically to attain good mental and physical states of health. By adopting the concept and practice of harmonization and balance in all aspects of life, one could maintain good health and achieve gracious aging with minimal medical interventions.

Biography

Goh Chye Tee is the Director of NTU Chinese Medicine Clinic and Former Director of Biomedical Sciences/Chinese Medicine Program at the School of Biological Sciences, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. In the midst of his career as an Accounting Professor at the Nanyang Business School, he has completed a Diploma in TCM from the Singapore College of TCM and a PhD from Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine in China. Subsequently, he became as a volunteer Physician and a Clinical Instructor at a charity clinic and was also a Member of the Accreditation Committee and TCM Examiner at the Ministry of Health Singapore. Lately, he also served as a WHO International Peer Reviewer on a TCM Standardization project initiated by the World Health Organization. His areas of research include acupuncture for pain management and bowel disorder of cancer patients, management of sub-health conditions with TCM, modernization of TCM with technology and smart management of wealth and health for gracious living.

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