

The Study of Overseas TCM Anti-epidemic Strategic Thinking and Future Developmental Trend

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Summary: The strategy of overseas TCM anti-epidemic measures: overseas TCM practitioners should actively strive for joining and volunteering in the Chinese foreign aid medical team. The focus of the anti-epidemic measures should be on preventative measures (suspected/mild/general cases) and the TCM treatments in the recovery period that highlight the successful experience against the epidemic in China as soon as possible through translations in different languages and wide distribution of these successful TCM anti-epidemic experiences to the affected countries. The two major communities for promoting TCM in the fight against the epidemic overseas are the Chinese community and other ethnic communities. It is recommended that an "International Joint Organization (Committee) of TCM Experts in the fight against the epidemic" be set up as soon as possible to coordinate the TCM anti-epidemic actions globally.

The future developmental trend is predicted to be the following: the special case for the epidemic will break the EU's restrictions on the import of Chinese patent medicines, there will be an acceleration in the development of the internet such as high-tech online education and medical treatment, and overseas TCM will be forced to transform from the agricultural era into a post-industrial age.

Through the incidents of the epidemic, the international development of TCM will be accelerated by at least 5 years or more. TCM & acupuncture practitioners are the countermarching people of the epidemic. The involvement of finance and venture capital will catalyze the development of an international chain of TCM & acupuncture. The successful results of TCM in fighting the epidemic will change the pattern of the world's health system.)

Keywords: overseas TCM, COVID-19, strategic thinking, developmental trend, preventive treatment

Introduction:

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Wuhan, China happened in late mid-January 2020. As the Chinese government adopted a decisive localized closure to isolate the source of infection, the Mobile cabin hospital was established to treat mild and severe patients separately, and TCM participated on a large scale in the whole process as an anti-epidemic measure. It successfully reduced the epidemic's growth rate in China and soon the epidemic situation in China will be eased. This is the result after a struggle of blood and water, sweat and tears.

In the early stage of the COVID-19 pandemic, with no special drugs and vaccines, the diagnosis and treatment plan for COVID-19 using TCM and the integration of Chinese and Western medicines had become an important feature and advantage of the Chinese plan. TCM participates in anti-epidemic processes on a large scale, by effectively relieving symptoms, reducing the development of mild and general types to serious, improving the healing rate, reducing the mortality rate, and boosting the recovery. [1]

Now, the epidemic situation in China has been greatly brought under control and seems to be coming to an end. The epidemic situation overseas has indeed raged, with death rates in some countries reaching as high as 10%. Overseas TCM against the epidemic has become the main opponents in the battlefield. Ways to share these TCM anti-epidemic knowledge from China, and actively join the battlefield of overseas TCM against the epidemic from different angles are the responsibility and obligation of TCM practitioners at home and abroad.

We should think and formulate strategies and guidelines for overseas TCM in the fight against the epidemic and extrapolate the future developmental trend based on the varying actual conditions of the countries in which the epidemic is occurring as well as the two different TCM anti-epidemic battlefields in Chinese communities and local ethnic communities.

I. Strategic guidelines for Overseas TCM in the fight against the epidemic:

Currently, the overseas epidemic situation is divided into two types: outbreaks and infections. Along with this are the two different battlefields: the Chinese community and the local ethnic community. The outbreak-affected countries have reached tens of thousands of patients and some even have more than 100,000 patients. The infection-affected countries are around 10,000 or less than 1,000 patients.

1. Overseas TCM practitioners should actively strive for joining the Chinese foreign aid medical team:

At the request of affected countries, China has dispatched Chinese medical teams to participate in directly aiding affected locations such as Iran and Italy. This is a very good time to promote TCM to the world. The Chinese medical team is mostly composed of Western medicine practitioners. It is recommended that in addition to the Chinese TCM experts who have joined, the local TCM & acupuncture experts from the affected countries can be invited to join the medical team. The local TCM & acupuncture practitioners can also actively apply to volunteer for the medical team.

1.1 Benefits of TCM & acupuncture experts in epidemic areas joining the Chinese medical team:

First, they will be the best professional medical interpreter of the team. Local TCM experts have been practicing medical service there for decades. In addition to being proficient in the language of the country, they also understand the local customs, policies and regulations, which are helpful for the interactions of the medical teams (Civil diplomacy).

Second, they can undertake teaching and overseeing medical tasks of "TCM combination methods" (Qigong, Tai Chi, Tuina, moxibustion, cupping, etc.) which can improve the body's immunity, make up for the shortage of medical personnels and highlight the advantages of TCM in fighting against the epidemic.

Third, under the leadership of the Chinese medical team, depending on the local situation (policy/regulation), they can advocate for the inclusion of TCM in the treatment plan.

1.2 The strategic significance of local TCM & acupuncture experts invited to join the Chinese medical team

First, if the local TCM experts can work together with the Chinese medical team to fight against the epidemic, it will have an extremely positive impact on the development of TCM & acupuncture in the affected country, and will help the TCM community in the country to communicate with their government to promote a TCM & acupuncture legislation. Its related work will help promote the development of the “Belt and Road” initiative as well.

Second, if the initial implementation in Italy, Iran and other countries are well settled, other countries will gradually follow and enforce it as well.

2. The focus of overseas TCM practitioners’ fight against the epidemic should be on prevention (suspected/mild/general cases) and the TCM treatment in the recovery period:

Currently, in countries with the epidemic such as Canada, the general Western medicine practitioners cannot participate in the treatment group as adequately. We, TCM practitioners are even less qualified to participate in the treatment directly. What we can do is work hard on prevention and prepare our defense at an early time. The focus should be on prevention (suspected/mild/general cases) and working on strengthening the immune system’s resistance. In addition to Chinese medicine, we also have a set of “TCM combination methods” such as Qigong, Tai Chi, Tuina, cupping, acupuncture, TCM psychotherapy, and more. Furthermore, intervention during the recovery period is also a strength of TCM rehabilitation.

3. The highlights of the Chinese plan - the successful experiences of TCM in the fight against the epidemic should be widely disseminated in the languages of the affected countries as soon as possible!

Recently, the COVID-19 academic lectures given by Academicians ZHANG Boli, HUANG Luqi, TONG Xiaolin, President LIU Qingquan and many more to TCM practitioners around the world were very successful, which greatly enhanced the fighting spirit and the confidence for the overseas TCM practitioners. However, how to take the next step out from the Chinese community and into the health management departments, different medical fields, and affected countries, and strive to share the successful benefits of TCM prevention and treatment as soon as possible are the urgent tasks of the current TCM international anti-epidemic strategy.

In recent days, some national health and medical administrations have issued a document saying that publications that “TCM can prevent COVID-19” cannot be made, otherwise it would be a violation. Therefore, widely distributing the highlights of the Chinese plan - the successful experiences of TCM in the fight against the epidemic, in the languages of the affected countries is the most urgent consideration and requires the quickest response for now.

3.1 To translate in the languages of the affected countries as soon as possible

The successful actions of TCM in the fight against the epidemic introduced by the academician team should be translated into English as soon as possible, and then be translated into the national languages through the branches of the affected countries. The publication should be in the form of a briefing book and doesn't need too much content. It should be concise and comprehensive. By releasing it frequently to provide repeated stimulation will make it salient to people.

3.2 To inform the relevant health management departments of the affected countries in the form of a briefing

Some countries have adopted legislation for TCM and/or acupuncture such as the United States, Canada, Australia and other countries in the Commonwealth. These countries have their own TCM and/or acupuncture governing body. While the countries without legislation should also have corresponding management agencies. All affiliated TCM and acupuncture groups should disclose their organization's email and other contact information. The non-governmental organizations, the World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies and the World Federation of Acupuncture and Moxibustion Societies can take the initiative to contact and establish an infrequent briefing report system. This will not only benefit the introduction of TCM in the fight against COVID-19, but also have a positive role in promoting the future development of the international strategy of TCM.

3.3 To translate to the language of the affected country and rapidly broadcast among the people

After the English briefing template is completed, the TCM members can cooperate and translate it into the languages of the affected countries as soon as possible. It can then be quickly spread among the people by using technical tools such as YouTube. It can motivate the population to create a demand for TCM and alert the relevant government departments of the country, which is conducive to the development of the international strategy of TCM.

4. The two major communities in overseas anti-epidemic:

The two main communities for overseas anti-epidemic are the Chinese community and other ethnic communities. Firstly, we mainly serve the Chinese community, such an example is the registration to establish the "TCM Online Mobile Cabin Hospital for Chinese". The overseas Chinese population believe in TCM and they also cooperate with prevention and treatment using TCM. Taking the Chinese community as a pilot and obtaining successful results, we can then refer to other ethnic communities in the affected countries for recommendation and sharing.

At present, overseas TCM practitioners should not be directly involved in the treatment, because it involves local medical qualifications and medical regulations that are more complicated. Overseas TCM is still based on the strategic policy of fighting against the epidemic, and promotes "TCM combination methods"- Qigong, Tai Chi, Tuina, Cupping, Moxibustion and more, to increase self-immunity.

5. It is recommended that an "International Joint Organization (Committee) of TCM Experts in the fight against the epidemic" be established as soon as possible to coordinate the TCM anti-epidemic actions globally.

It is strongly suggested that this work be supervised by the national TCM governing body and invitations to participate be sent to relevant ministries such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Trade. The non-governmental organizations, the World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies and the World Federation of Acupuncture and Moxibustion Societies, should come forward and be responsible for the operation at the front, helping to screen the prestigious local TCM experts (those leaders who are leading overseas TCM) in the affected countries. It also needs the support from the embassy or consulate of the country as well.

After the establishment of the non-governmental organization, it can take the initiative to contact the TCM governing body of the countries which have adopted legislation for TCM and/or acupuncture already, and the relevant medical management institutions of the countries that have not yet legislated, to report regularly or irregularly the experience and achievements of TCM in fight against the epidemic. The purpose is to coordinate the global TCM anti-epidemic actions and prevent exaggeration and stigmatization during the international TCM anti-epidemic process.

II. Prediction of the trend of future development - the epidemic will speed up TCM development overseas

1. Due to the special situation with the epidemic, it will crack down the EU 's restrictions on the import of Chinese patent medicines.

On May 1, 2011, the European Traditional Herbal Medicinal Products Directive (THMPD) came into effect. Herbal medicine without authorisation from the EU, including almost all the Chinese patent medicines, could not be sold and used in the EU market.

The European THMPD issued on April 30, 2004 had been given a transition period of up to 7 years. In the interim, more than 350 botanical medicines were successfully authorized, but unfortunately there were not Chinese patent medicines among them.

Due to the current special situation with the epidemic, the Chinese patent medicines will be released into the EU because of the "green path", thus practically breaching the 2011 EU regulations on the import of Chinese patent medicines and burying the hint to the EU's future regulation amendment (reprint). This is an unexpected opportunity and we should take the initiative and make it possible.

2. The epidemic has accelerated the development of internet towards high-tech online education and medical care

The epidemic in 2020 has forced everyone to work from home or take online courses. The epidemic accelerated the development of the internet such as high-tech online education and online medical care. Recently, several academicians and their teams have used the "Cloud Lecture" method to give out a successful COVID-19 academic lecture on TCM treatment to TCM practitioners around the world, which greatly enhanced the fighting spirit and confidence of the overseas TCM practitioners. The beginning of "TCM Online Mobile Cabin Hospital for Chinese" facilitates online consultation for international students

and the Chinese who are overseas. "Express mail" can solve the need for medical supplies and technological advancements has developed "non-contact remote auscultation" and other equipment to assist online diagnoses.

I once pointed out in my article "The Top Ten Trends & Strategic Thinking of the International Development of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture in the 21st Century" published in 2015: "With the further development of IT technology, the instant translation and conversion of different languages on the Internet will become more mature and practical in a few years. TCM can be taught by teachers in different countries. Due to the improvement of image recognition technology and the development of portable medical equipment, Internet remote diagnosis and TCM treatment will gradually become a reality. This predicts that it will play a special role, especially in the TCM treatment for sub-health and longevity medicine. Different types of WeChat groups nowadays have achieved a certain degree of professional exchange. "Cloud Lecture" provides free time and space for continuing education. To take the "network" road and read the "group" books has become a high-level business practice for overseas TCM." [2] These predictions have been accelerated in the epidemic situation.

We believe when the epidemic has passed, there will be a group of "unicorns" in the field of general health and a promising growth in the TCM industry at home and abroad.

3. The epidemic forces overseas TCM to transform from the agricultural era to the post-industrial era

The characteristics of the agricultural era are based on self-sufficiency and a managing-on-their-own way. The characteristics of the industrial era is large-scale production and a collective mindset with a need to cooperate with each other. The rapid development and application of IT in the post-industrial 5G era have cut the spatial distance between countries, and the instant translation has solved the language barriers of people. Extensive information sharing has become the norm in people's daily life.

Overseas TCM practitioners opened clinics with the three-finger diagnosis technique and lived a life of self-sufficiency in the agricultural era. The characteristics of this agricultural era made overseas TCM practitioners more fragmented and independent of each other which, at the same time, resulted in the lack of the progressive mechanism like discussing cases between peers in China. This sudden outbreak has forced everyone to learn to use post-industrial technologies such as online diagnosis and treatment, and directly bypass the industrial era and go from the agricultural era to the post-industrial era. In the process of stepping over, some people may not keep up and will end up being eliminated. If we master and use the technology of the post-industrial era properly, it will make TCM stronger and allow it to go further.

4. Through the occasional outbreak of the epidemic, the development of international TCM will be accelerated by at least 5 years or more.

China has sent the anti-epidemic experts and medical teams to Iran, Serbia, Italy, Iraq, Pakistan and other countries. It has provided material assistance like masks and protective clothing to many countries. It has also provided the successful Chinese experiences of TCM in fighting the epidemic to many

countries with serious outbreaks. Through this incident, the slow development of TCM in the affected countries and internationally can be accelerated by at least 5 years or more.

5. TCM & acupuncture practitioners are the countermarching people of the epidemic. The involvement of finance and venture capital will catalyze the development of the international chain of TCM & acupuncture.

With the development of overseas TCM & acupuncture today, we have the conditions to form an international chain of TCM & acupuncture. This epidemic has made TCM a global topic and will develop rapidly if finance and venture capital are involved.

For nearly half a century, TCM & acupuncture have been developed in the form of individual, professional households overseas. The investment threshold is low, and it is not easy to be valued by finance and venture capital. The key is that the industry has no legislation and there is little room for development. In recent years, the "time" has been formed. The "geographical advantage" should be in countries like Canada, the United States, and Australia who have (partial) insurance covers, on top of the vitality of financial and venture capital injection and talented management groups to integrate scattered but reputable clinics, it will form a chained and listed industry. It is expected to be established in 5-8 years and to take shape in 10-15 years.

After the epidemic has passed, as the national policy favors TCM & acupuncture, it is expected to accelerate the development of the international chain of TCM & acupuncture.

6. The success of TCM in fighting against the epidemic will change the structure of the health system in the world

The outbreak of the epidemic has raged, giving people around the world the opportunity to re-examine TCM, lament its research methods beyond the times (holistic view, etc.), and thank it for its excellent clinical treatment capabilities and thousands of years of vitality (history)! "Looking around the world, only TCM has come along for thousands of years and can be compared with Western medicine nowadays, both of them are outstanding and have individual sources of origin"(quote from professor ZHANG Jin, representative of human intangible cultural heritage of TCM & acupuncture). You can see that its vitality rooted in clinical practice is powerful.

The "Eleventh Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11)" was adopted by the 72nd World Health Assembly held in Geneva, Swiss on May 25, 2019, including the traditional medical chapters originally from TCM for the first time. The International Classification of Diseases (ICD) was developed by the World Health Organization (WHO). It is an internationally unified standard for disease classification. It is a normative standard for disease classification in the medical, management, teaching and scientific research and formulation of policies by governments of all countries, and one of the authoritative foundations and common standards in the field of global health.

The ICD has been revised 10 times in a hundred years. The inclusion of traditional medicine in the "International Classification of Diseases" marks the recognition of the value of this part of traditional medicine which includes traditional Chinese medicine by the entire international public health system

represented by WHO, at the same time, it also recognizes the reality that TCM is being increasingly used in China and internationally.

The newly-incorporated TCM-related information will be implemented in the WHO member countries in 2022, which means that TCM will gradually become a mainstream therapy worldwide and no longer be just a supplementary alternative therapy for surgery, radiotherapy and others.

The pandemic of COVID-19 will change the current international political ecology and will accelerate the transfer of power and influence from west to east. The success of China in fighting the epidemic is fully affirmed by the World Health Organization this time. WHO's own website has officially removed the suggestion of "do not use traditional herbs" for anti-epidemic, and TCM may become a sample treatment of the world's anti-epidemic.

This crisis will reshuffle the international power structure including the world health system in an unprecedented way. The history of the COVID-19 pandemic will be written by the winners, and will be a great victory for democracy, multilateralism and universal health care. The success of TCM in fighting the epidemic will accelerate changes in the world health system.

Conclusion:

In the last century, the U.S. president Nixon's visit to China in 1972 was the first turning point of TCM's debut in the world. Nearly half a century later, TCM & acupuncture has been legislated and rooted in many countries and is spreading all over the world.

The outbreak of 2020 will show the clinical superiority of TCM to the people of the world. It will become the second peak of TCM's introduction to the world in this century, and will lead to the actualization of the legalization of TCM worldwide. We, as the TCM practitioners overseas, should unite and seize the opportunity given by history to heighten TCM's prestige around the world!

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