

THE ALL-IN-ONE BODY IN TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

by Fang Mu, OMD. L. Ac.

Western medicine and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) are like brother and sister; both are useful in treating illness and restoring health. Western diagnostic techniques are very useful; surgery is necessary for some conditions; and, some illnesses require strong medicines.

And yet, one of the main differences between the two is how they conceptualize the parts of the body and how these parts relate to each other.

The human body is made up of many parts, including muscle, tissues, bone and organs - each of which has its own special functions. Each of these functions represents part of the body's life process, which in turn determines the unity within the body. Physiologically, the parts of the human body are inseparable from each other because of the influence each has upon the other. It is a beautiful and wonderful system.

In TCM, there are eleven organs known as the Zang-Fu organs, which include the lung, liver, spleen, heart, kidney, intestines, and stomach. The Chinese see the Zang Fu organs as being inter-connected. For example, your heart controls your thinking in the sense that the heart regulates the blood, the blood nourishes the brain, and the movement of blood through the brain influences the way that you think.

Traditional Chinese Medicine states that the human body is healthy when it is in balance; specifically when the Yin (substance) and Yang (function) are in balance. An imbalance in Yin and Yang is one of the basic causes of disease. Some things that upset this balance are improper diet, an imbalance between work and rest, emotional upset, as well as surgery and injury.

Molecules in a block of ice cannot move freely. In the same way, when blockages develop in the body's Qi (chi or vital energy), the Qi is prevented from moving freely. These blockages must be removed.

Moxibustion uses the Chinese herb moxa in the acupuncture treatment. Moxa helps to remove blockages and resistance in the energy in the blood. It also strengthens the body and supports the immune system. Used at strategic acupuncture points, moxa will properly transport the channel Qi, and restore and regulate the functions of the Zang-Fu organs.

Ann was feeling sickly, with swollen wrists and ankles, and her skin was hot and red. After checking her pulse and tongue, I could see that she might soon have a lung problem. Two days later she called with a bad cough, and I advised her to see her physician, who diagnosed her with pneumonia.

Ann then returned to me for treatment, because she did not want to begin a regimen of antibiotics.

Ann's Qi had become very weak, allowing the pathogens to invade her body from the exterior to the interior, and from superficial areas to deeper areas through the energy channels. I used acupuncture and herbs to clear away the imbalance of heat in her body, remove toxic substances, invigorate her Qi, and enrich her blood. After this treatment, her joint swelling was gone, and her lungs became clear.

Continuous chest and stomach pain, headaches and dizziness brought Leslie to see me. Sometimes the pain kept her from going to school, and she took pain and sleeping medicines every day.

Leslie, now 17, had started swimming every day at the age of 5, and had a deep muscle injury when she was 6 years old. That injury had never completely healed, yet she still kept swimming, and from that point on, she had chest and stomach pain that never got better.

Medical tests showed no discernable illness, but through Traditional Chinese Medicine, I saw that her blood stasis worked together with a pathogenic cold quality, to attack the body's Qi channels and collaterals, then further intruded into the internal organs along the channels.

Using acupuncture, moxibustion and herbs, we were able to improve blood circulation and remove obstruction in the channels and vessels. With each treatment Leslie improved until she was fully recovered. She is now in college, and her mother emailed me recently to say that Leslie is very healthy, with no pain, and even her hair is shinier than ever before!

In China today, both TCM and Western medicine are used, which is the best way to help people recover from illness and enjoy good health. It is the same way with the patient and the doctor, who are like yin and yang - both are really one part, just as all the parts of the body are really one part. Thus, the results are best if they work together in harmony.

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