AAAOM Welcomes New Faculty Members

Three new faculty members with Ph.D. training in acupuncture and Chinese medicine will join the expanded AAAOM faculty. These three new faculty members are Dr. Neng Thao, Dr. Yifan Liu and Brian Grosam. Dr. Neng Thao is an AAAOM alumnus, receiving his Master of Science in Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine degree in 2003. After that Dr. Thao attended Shandong University of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) in China and received his Ph.D. in 2007. Dr. Thao initiated the AAAOM Multiple Sclerosis clinic. Dr. Yifan Liu is an outstanding teacher at Shandong University with many teaching awards. He received his Ph.D. in acupuncture from Tianjin University of TCM and continued his post-doctoral work in Chinese medicine theory at Shandong University of TCM. Brian Grosam received his Master of Science from AAAOM in 2005 and continued his education with a Ph.D. program specializing in gynecology at Shandong University of TCM. He is returning to this country for his Ph.D. dissertation and will take a part-time teaching position at AAAOM.

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Presentation

In March, AAAOM Academic Dean Dr. Yubin Lu was invited by the Minneapolis MS Society to provide a presentation: "Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine in the Treatment of MS." AAAOM senior intern Brent Barness also joined in the presentation. Dr. Lu reviewed the etiology, pathology, diagnosis, treatment principles and treatment protocols for MS from a Chinese medicine perspective. Brent informed the attendees about the operations and clinical procedures of AAAOM's MS Clinic. Clinical patient cases were also presented and demonstrated. The MS Clinic, established in 2005, was AAAOM's first specialty clinic. Since its inception, close to one hundred patients have been treated at the MS Clinic. Dr. Robert Bleau, who is a family practitioner and serves as the medical director of the MS Clinic, firmly believes that scalp acupuncture is one of the most powerful treatment methods available.

New Project on "Super Points"

The curriculum of acupuncture and Oriental medicine at AAAOM is a very traditional Chinese medicine-focused one. AAAOM's curriculum is continually refined by our exceptional faculty team, and given substance by their outstanding teaching. The fundamental basis of AAAOM's curriculum content is a combination of classical methodology and contemporary science-based approaches. Following this philosophy, AAAOM has launched a new project on "super" acupuncture points. This project will analyze and detail the historical evolution, literature analysis, case reports, clinical applications, needling techniques, point combinations and modern research on these "super" acupuncture points. The points include SP6 (Sanyinjiao), ST36 (Zusanli), DU20 (Baihui), GB20 (Fengchi), LI4 (Hegu - pictured to the left), LR3 (Taichong), RN4 (Guanyuan), RN12 (Zhongwan), PC6 (Neiguan), and SP9 (Yinlingquan). The project is a co-operative venture between AAAOM and the Shandong Academy of Traditional Chinese Medicine.
New Publications

A ten-volume series of Chinese-language acupuncture manuals produced by faculty members at AAAOM has been officially released in China. This series covers 700 conditions in internal medicine, gynecology, neurology, geriatrics, pediatrics, orthopedics, dermatology, ophthalmology and otolaryngology, and supplementary therapy in surgery and cancer treatments. These manuals were published by Tianjin Science and Technology Translation Publishing Company.

Recently, AAAOM faculty member Dr. Wen Jiang published her article, "Clinical Applications on Needling DU20 (Baihui)", in the *Internal Journal of Clinical Acupuncture*. Dr. Changzhen Gong and Dr. Daiyi Tang's article "From Experience to Evidence" was accepted by the *Medical Acupuncture Journal*. The *International Journal of Clinical Acupuncture* has published Dr. Hong Chen's lectures on treatment of herpes zoster and eczema with traditional Chinese medicine and Dr. Tang's article on how to deal with fear of needles.

The *International Journal of Clinical Acupuncture* also published articles by an AAAOM student and two alumnae: senior student Melissa Schultz published her article, "Tips on Learning and Teaching TCM"; alumna Li Wang published her study on irritable bowel syndrome; and alumna Julie McCormick published her case on treating bladder dysfunction due to multiple sclerosis with acupuncture.

Faculty Presentation at ACMC Medical Forum

AAAOM faculty members Dr. Yubin Lu, Dr. Hong Chen, and Dr. Changzhen Gong, along with Dr. Gregory Plotnikoff from the Institute of Health and Healing at Abbott Northwestern Hospital, were invited to take part in a panel presentation on April 23, 2008 at the Third ACMC Medical Forum. ACMC is a non-profit organization of Chinese physicians who practice either conventional Western medicine or traditional Chinese medicine. The third medical forum focused on complementary and alternative medicine, with an emphasis on traditional Chinese medicine. Fifty physicians and Chinese medicine practitioners attended the forum, along with other health care professionals.

Dr. Yubin Lu explained the fundamental difference between traditional Chinese medicine and conventional Western medicine by comparing qi theory with atomic theory. Dr. Changzhen Gong presented an overview of traditional Chinese medicine in the United States, focusing on the areas of utilization, education, legislation, and research. Dr. Hong Chen presented her successful clinical experience in treating psoriasis, acne and eczema with traditional Chinese medicine. These presentations were highly commended by physicians who attended.

A Meeting with Leading Chinese Medicine Authorities

The American Academy of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine hosted a dinner for a visiting team of academics from Tianjin University of Traditional Chinese Medicine this spring. Heading the team was professor Zhang Boli. Professor Zhang is the president of Tianjin University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Academician of the China Academy of Engineering, and a recognized expert in the area of Innovative Medicine.

Professor Zhang invited Dr. Changzhen Gong to come to the first international conference on Chinese medicine education which will be held in Tianjin in September. Among the subjects discussed at this meeting were the effective teaching of Chinese medicine and the most useful textbooks of Chinese medicine.

Exhibit on China's Three Gorges Dam

A multimedia exhibit featuring photos taken by Macalester College Associate Professor Wang Ping, in addition to a video installation, will be on display at AAAOM. Entitled *Behind the Gate*, the subject matter introduces visitors to the benefits and dangers of the Three Gorges Dam, and it details the stories of individuals displaced by the project and of its environmental impacts. The setting takes place starting just days before the June 6, 2006 blasting of the coffer dam and in the aftermath during the following months. It shows not only the dam, the flooded waterways and towering new concrete construction, but also the people and towns to and from which they have relocated.
American Academy of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine

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My Studies in Acupuncture

By Wen Jiang, TCMD, Ph.D., L.Ac.

Time is flying; it has already been three years since I received my Ph.D. in acupuncture. But whenever I look back on that three-year period of study and research, it still seems like it was just yesterday.

My experience was different from most students in China these days. Instead of staying in school continuously through my Ph.D. degree, I worked in a hospital for about ten years after graduating with my Master’s degree. Then I returned to school for my Ph.D. studies. In fact, it was my experience in the "real world" of hospital work that inspired me to pursue my doctorate. With ten years of clinical experience, I could see how well acupuncture worked and how much it helped people. I had a lot of clinical experience treating stroke patients – the third most "popular" disease in the world – and I was amazed by how often acupuncture produced dramatic results in my patients. Many of them had been disappointed when Western medicine failed to improve their condition, and they saw acupuncture as their final hope. When I watched these patients walk out of the hospital by themselves I was moved by the power of what I had seen. How did acupuncture change the human body? How could I use acupuncture more efficiently to treat disease? With these questions in my mind, I made my final decision: I would give up my present work, become a "poor" student again, and put all my efforts into acupuncture study. Then, in the future, I would be able to help more people.

Actually, Ph.D. studies in acupuncture have become more popular in China in recent years, as more and more TCM universities have qualified to set up Ph.D. programs in acupuncture. Universities have improved and expanded their capacity for laboratory and clinical research in acupuncture mechanism studies, enabling students to conduct more modern research in acupuncture. All this research is giving "fresh blood" to both theoretical and applied acupuncture.

I was always interested in acupuncture techniques because I realized that applying different techniques to the same acupoint could bring about different therapeutic results. That is why I decided on Professor Shi Xuemin as my Ph.D. dissertation advisor. Professor Shi is an internationally-known expert on acupuncture techniques, especially as applied to the treatment of stroke patients. First I had to pass a series of very competitive tests, then I had to see if Professor Shi would accept me as his student. I heard that Professor Shi generally preferred to mentor male students, so I considered myself very fortunate when he approved my application to study under him. I believe Professor Shi chose me because of my ten years of clinical experience.

In China, Ph.D. studies in TCM are set up as a three-year program: one year of academic study followed by two years of research. During my academic studies I took several classical courses such as "Study of Classical Chinese Medicine Literature" and "Classical Chinese Medicine Literature Review." I also took modern medicine classes, such as Physio-biology, Molecular Biology, Research Principles, etc. These classes prepared the way for the next stage: designing and conducting my acupuncture research project. Ph.D. dissertation topics were required to be "new" (based on an original thesis or on newly-available data) and "useful" (producing measurable results in a clinic or laboratory setting). Research projects must be completed in two years.

Because I was interested in acupuncture mechanism study in relation to treating stroke, my dissertation topic would have to be on laboratory research. The specific focus I decided on was "The Study of Acupuncture Influence on Signal Transduction Mechanism of Hippocampal Neuron in Rats of Cerebral Ischemia Reperfusion." First I set up the stroke model in a rat, and then tried different methods to treat the rat for stroke symptoms. This research demonstrated the effect of acupuncture on neuron cells. It is easy to describe my research project in this way, but the actual effort of doing it took all my time and energy for two years of my life. I swore I would quit more than once before I finally finished the research project.

I have to say how much I came to appreciate my mentor, Professor Shi. He was very supportive, not only academically, but in my personal life as well. For instance, when I told him I needed to move from Tianjin to Beijing to finish my research project, he agreed at once and asked one of his friends and colleagues who lived in Beijing to help me with housing and other necessities. Whenever I encountered a problem with my research, Professor Shi always stopped what he was doing in order to help me. Since he is the president of a large hospital in Tianjin, it could be a sacrifice on his part to help me. He even said, "You don't need to make an appointment to see me, just come to my office at any time." Because of his kindness and support, I finished my research project on time, passed the dissertation debate, and got my Ph.D.
Although the unsettled nature of the US economy and its key industries makes a lot of people nervous, acupuncture practitioners should not have to worry too much about making a living. With every passing year Americans become more aware of complementary medicine services, and many are willing to use these services even though they often have to pay for them out of their own pockets.

Acupuncture clinics are visible in the streets and shopping malls of every major city, and acupuncture services are becoming readily available in hospitals such as Abbott Northwestern Hospital in Minneapolis. Newspaper and magazine articles, as well as spots on national television shows such as Oprah have promoted strong public interest in exploring this new avenue for personal health and healing.

In addition to the interest generated by popular media, acupuncture and Oriental medicine also have the advantage of being taken seriously by many in the scientific and medical communities. The establishment of the Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine within the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the research which has been funded through that agency have proved to many skeptics the validity of acupuncture as a treatment modality in areas such as pain reduction, menstrual disorders, anti-nausea treatment, infertility treatment, among many other common conditions.

Acupuncture research using sophisticated processes, for example, functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), is an area of growing interest to scientists. Many infertility clinics now maintain a staff acupuncturist because of conclusive evidence that acupuncture treatments before and after in vitro fertilization significantly increase the chances of a successful pregnancy. The infrastructure which will permit acupuncture to develop into an established medical profession is being laid out now. In the coming years, I foresee the acupuncture profession developing and extending in the following four directions.

**General Acupuncture Clinics**

Acupuncture and Oriental medicine services provided by independent, well-trained practitioners are able to treat most common health conditions (and many complicated ones) very effectively. Neighborhood acupuncture clinics can provide large numbers of people with a convenient, reasonably-priced way to meet their health care needs.

The holistic nature of Chinese medicine makes an acupuncture clinic the primary destination for many patients who are looking for an individual, non-invasive approach to their health problems. Headaches, back pain, women's health issues, and skin problems now account for a high proportion of visits to a doctor's office. These problems can be just as effectively treated by an acupuncturist, and there will be a growing demand for this type of service as people become more aware of their options.

**Acupuncture Specialty Clinics**

Acupuncture infertility clinics, acupuncture "facial rejuvenation" clinics, acupuncture macular degeneration clinics, weight loss and smoking cessation clinics, and many other types of acupuncture specialty clinics have experienced phenomenal growth in the US in the past few years. This trend will continue. In China, TCM services have developed into more than 600 specialties. This development in the direction of specialization will be assimilated into the American acupuncture profession.

**Integration into Hospitals**

At this point, acupuncture is the complementary medicine modality which Western M.D.s refer their patients to most often. As a continuation of this development, hospitals across the country are looking at the possibility of integrating acupuncture into their services. Pioneering efforts along these lines by North Hawaii Community Hospital on the Big Island and Abbott Northwestern Hospital in Minneapolis are rapidly changing the landscape of how medicine will be practiced in the new century.

**Integrative Medicine**

Medical schools, medical centers and hospitals are looking ahead into the 21st century and seeing their future in integrative medicine. Acupuncture is an important component of integrative medicine. Duke Integrative Medicine Center on the Duke University campus and the Center for Spirituality and Healing at the University of Minnesota are harbingers of this new trend.
The Theoretical Basis of Acupuncture

By Yubin Lu, TCMD, Ph.D., L.Ac.

In the treatment room, I am almost always asked the two same questions by a new patient: "Is acupuncture painful?" and "How does acupuncture work?"

The second question is very hard to answer, since people expect to hear an answer in terms of modern Western science. Acupuncture, as a part of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), is a therapy based on totally different philosophical ideas from Western medicine in terms of its understanding of the human body and its methods of diagnosing and treating disease. In this article, I will outline the two most essential TCM theories upon which acupuncture practice is based: qi theory and meridian theory.

Qi Theory
Before we ask why and how acupuncture works, we need to understand how acupuncture developed in the first place, and what contributed to the invention of the theories on which acupuncture is based. Many theories have been developed in Chinese philosophy, such as Yin Yang theory and Five Elements theory, and these theories have all played important roles in the development of acupuncture, but Qi theory is the essential foundation of everything in Chinese medicine. Chinese philosophy believes that everything is composed of Qi, which is defined as a "basic substance" without border, shape or size. Qi is in constant movement. The movement of Qi creates everything visible and substantial, maintains the existence of everything, and brings about change in everything. The human body, like everything else visible and substantial, is composed of Qi. Different manifestations of Qi in the human body support and maintain the different parts of the human body. In the body, some of Qi's movement is channeled along pathways called meridians. Acupuncture points are special places along the meridians which allow meridian Qi to come out or allow Qi to enter the meridians. The Qi which moves in the liver meridian, for example, supports the functions of the liver entity and its related structures, such as the tendons and the eyes, and it also carries the particular nature of liver energy throughout the body.

When the Qi of the human body moves in ways that maintain the normal functioning of the body, we say the body is healthy. When Qi movement is "wrong" for any reason, the body will show abnormal manifestations which can be called disease. In a situation of disease, the disordered movement of Qi will be reflected in the meridians as well as in the acupoints along the meridians. Patients are surprised when an acupuncturist finds their tender spots easily after they have explained their symptoms. Acupuncture stimulation at these points will have an effect on the Qi in the meridian so that the abnormal movement of Qi can be corrected and adjusted. When acupuncture practitioners needle a point, they are looking for a special response in the patient which can be an achyng sensation, a heavy sensation or a distending sensation. This sensation is important in achieving a therapeutic effect because it tells the acupuncturist that the Qi in the meridians is responding to the treatment, and thus the disordered flow of Qi will be corrected. For instance, shoulder pain can be diagnosed as a local obstruction of Qi and Blood. When needles are inserted in the shoulder and other related points, Qi movement is stimulated, which can remove the obstruction and reduce the pain.

Acupuncture practitioners have a choice of needling techniques they can use to affect the movement of Qi. Different needling techniques are applied in accordance with different natures of diseases. If a patient demonstrates a "excess" pattern (which means it is a condition mainly caused by strong pathogens), and the vital Qi of the body is still strong, the acupuncturist uses a "reducing technique" to reduce the excess. When a patient demonstrates a "deficiency" pattern, a lack of sufficient vital Qi is the main problem, and the acupuncturist uses a tonifying technique when needling. It is even possible for the same point to produce different results based on the manipulation technique used. Therefore, the same point could be used to treat two opposite conditions. ST 36 (Zusanli) can treat both constipation and diarrhea, depending on the way the needle is manipulated, and depending on the conditions the patient has.

A very interesting research study conducted in the 1950's expanded the view of how acupuncture works on the human body. A number of patients who suffered from dysentery were treated with acupuncture, and the results showed that they recovered much faster than dysentery patients who did not receive acupuncture treatment. It is impossible that the acupuncture needles worked as antibiotics, and of course it is not imaginable that the needles impaled the bacteria one by one. The explanation scientists were left with is that acupuncture stimulated some type of healing mechanism in the human body through which the body eliminated the disease.
Nowadays, scientists are using very sophisticated research tools such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to investigate the mechanisms of acupuncture treatment. Scientific confirmation of traditional acupoint functions is very common. For example, inserting a needle at SP 6 (San yinjiao) produces verifiable contractions of the uterus, and this point is traditionally used to treat gynecological conditions. Inserting needles at ST 36 (Zusanli) can change peristalsis in the gastrointestinal tract, and so on. However, these studies can only help us to understand a very small aspect of the mechanisms of acupuncture. There is still a lot of work to do if we want to have a comprehensive scientific understanding of the body’s response to acupuncture. This type of research is often difficult to formulate because it is using Western-based tools to study Eastern-based philosophical structures.

**Meridian Theory**

Meridian theory is directly related to acupuncture practice. Most of the points practitioners use in the clinic are located along the meridians. According to meridian theory, each zang (yin) internal organ is connected to its paired fu (yang) internal organ by a special meridian. This zang/fu pairing is important in connecting interior and exterior aspects of the body. Each of the twelve traditional zang/fu organs corresponds to one of the twelve regular meridians, and superficial parts of the body such as muscles and skin are also connected to corresponding internal organs through the mechanism of the meridians. The twelve major meridians connect with each other in a way that allows the body’s Qi and blood to circulate freely through all the meridians. The major meridians also have a lot of branches, which are called collaterals. Collaterals include major collaterals, superficial collaterals and minute collaterals. Through these meridians and collaterals, Qi and blood can flow from internal organs and circulate to the whole body.

Meridian theory sets up a network of movement of Qi throughout the body, and from the viewpoint of meridians, we can say that meridians not only carry and distribute Qi and blood, they also function to convey messages from one part of the body to another, such as nerves do in Western scientific thought. The messages that meridians convey include acupuncture stimulation. This is why stimulation of acupoints which are located at some distance from the affected area can still have a dramatic therapeutic effect on that area. For example, shoulder and neck pain are effectively treated by needling SI 3 (Houxi), which is located on the hand, since SI 3 is on the meridian that distributes over the shoulder and neck.

Acupuncture is an organic part of Chinese medicine. The theoretical basis of acupuncture is also the basis for the entire practice of Chinese medicine. Zang/fu theory, Fundamental Substances theory, Five Element theory, Yin/Yang theory, and pathogenic factors are all important TCM theories applied in acupuncture practice.

So when a patient asks me for the thousandth time about how acupuncture works, I always smile and say, "We have special glasses we use to look at the body. There are very reasonable explanations about how acupuncture works in Chinese medicine, but I can't offer you an answer completely from the viewpoint of modern science. Maybe in the future there will be an explanation that works in both systems. But acupuncture works, and thousands of years of clinical experience has proven the theories we use in Chinese medicine are correct."
The treatment modality of acupuncture has developed over several thousand years of Chinese history. Now we are the beneficiaries of centuries of experimentation and have a variety of acupuncture tools and techniques at our disposal. Choosing the proper tools and using the right techniques is key to getting the best treatment effect with acupuncture.

When we talk about acupuncture tools, the first thing people think about is the standard filiform needle. But even with filiform needles there are a number of different types and sizes. The Yellow Emperor's Classic Medicine book, published two thousand years ago, has a chapter called "Nine Needles" which discusses the form and usages of nine different needles. These nine needle types are still in use in modern acupuncture clinics. One of the needle types discussed in the classic Chinese text is called Yuan Zhen, which has a needle tip which is rounded instead of being sharp. This needle was used as an acupressure tool for "massaging" an acupuncture point or meridian, rather than as a puncturing tool. Generally speaking, the most common acupuncture tools used in clinics today are the following:

**Filiform Needles**
The length of these needles (pictured below) can vary from 0.5 cun to 5 cun (one cun unit measurement is roughly equivalent to one inch), and the diameter ranges from thick to thin. This is the type of needle most often used in acupuncture treatments, especially in the US. Shorter needles (0.5 – 1.0 cun) can be used on children, in areas without much underlying muscle such as the face and fingers, and on sensitive patients. Longer needles may be useful where there is adipose tissue or thicker muscles, such as the abdomen or limbs. The same needle can generate different sensations in the patient, depending on how it is manipulated. Patients may feel pressure, heaviness, or an "electric" sensation. Specific needling methods can bring about warm or cold sensations and can cause the sensation to radiate out along the meridian to distal areas.

**Electric Needles**
In this method, the needles are connected to an electric stimulation machine (pictured below). The electro-stim machine can produce different electric waves and cause different sensations in the patient. In a standard acupuncture treatment, needles are inserted, manipulated manually to achieve a specific sensation, and left in place for 20 to 30 minutes. With electric needles, the electro-stim machine stimulates the acupuncture points continuously during the entire treatment. This technique is extremely effective in the treatment of nerve injuries and some chronic illnesses.

**Cutaneous Needles**
This is also called a "seven-star needle", because seven short needles are imbedded in a flat head. Cutaneous needles are used to tap on acupuncture points or along a meridian. Because this type of needle is not inserted into the body, but only used to tap the skin, the stimulation it gives is very gentle. It can be effectively used to treat pain syndromes and skin conditions, and is easily accepted by children and sensitive adults.

**Intradermal Needles**
These needles are very small, and look exactly like tiny thumbtacks. Most practitioners use tweezers to position intradermal needles and tap them into the skin. Once they are positioned, intradermal needles can stay in for several days. This prolongs the treatment effect and is useful to treat chronic conditions such as pain syndromes, weight loss, and addiction recovery.
Continuing Education Seminars

Offered by AAAOM Faculty

August 9th, 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.: Treatment of Infertility with Herbs and Acupuncture
Dr. Wei Liu will share with you her unique experience in pattern identification, selection of herbal formulas, selection of acupuncture points and special acupuncture techniques for infertility.

August 9th, 1:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Improve Your Understanding of Pulse Conditions
Dr. Yubin Lu will provide participants with a unique view of pulses and share insights leading to successful analysis of different pulse conditions.

August 10th, 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.: Treatment of Gynecological Disease with Acupuncture
Dr. Wen Jiang presents a detailed analysis of the most useful acupoints and acupuncture techniques in the treatment of commonly seen gynecological diseases.

August 10th, 1:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.: TCM Treatment of Diabetes and Its Complications
Dr. Daiyi Tang will provide materials on diabetes, including a materia medica and formulary, and why literature on diabetes does not mirror real-life clinical practice.

August 16th, 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.: Treatment of Skin Disorders with Chinese Herbs
Dr. Hong Chen will share with you some keys points in pattern diagnosis of skin disorders as well as tips in the selection of the right herbal treatment for such conditions as psoriasis, eczema, acne, etc.

August 16th, 1:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.: Ethics and Practice Management
Dr. Changzhen Gong will cover the most effective ways to set up an acupuncture clinic including an ethics segment that will provide you with CEU credits for renewal of your diploma from NCCAOM.

August 17th, 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.: Treating Peripheral Neurological Diseases with TCM
Dr. Xiangdong Yu will discuss the differentiation of common peripheral neurological disorders, essentials of pattern diagnosis, herbal treatments, as well as the most effective acupuncture points and needling techniques.

August 17th, 1:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.: Group Needling Technique for Pain Conditions
In this seminar, Dr. Cheng Chi will show you the "group needling" technique he uses to treat different pain conditions, methods to quickly locate those points, and the needling techniques he employs.

Cost: Individual Seminars: $45 each (4 CEUs)
Two Seminars: $85 (8 CEUs)
Eight Seminars: $295 (32 CEUs)
Please call 651-631-0204 for full details about each of these seminars and to register.

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Dr. Wei Liu
Doctor of Chinese Medicine
Acupuncturist (Lic.)
Nutritionist (Lic.)
Herbologist (Dipl.)

Dr. Li Gu
Doctor of Chinese Medicine
Professor
Acupuncturist (Lic.)
Herbologist

Dr. Xinrong He
Doctor of Chinese Medicine
Professor
Acupuncturist (Lic.)
Herbologist

Dr. Cheng Chi
Doctor of Chinese Medicine
Professor
Acupuncturist (Lic.)
Herbologist
Neng Thao is a 2002 graduate of AAAOM. He was awarded a Ph.D. by Shandong University of TCM (China) in 2005. Dr. Thao, a licensed acupuncturist, practices Oriental Medicine in Center City, MN, and is an instructor of Tuina at AAAOM.

L.N.: You are the first member of the Hmong community in Minnesota to become a TCM doctor. Why did you decide to pursue this field of study?
Dr. Thao: I was used to seeing my parents and grandparents using traditional Hmong medicine, so the use of acupuncture and herbs was very natural to me. In 1999 I was doing social work for a non-profit organization and saw an advertisement in an Asian newspaper for a new school of Chinese medicine. Something clicked in me when I read about AAAOM – it was like the questions were directed to me personally. I talked to Dr. Gong and several of the students and decided this was what I wanted to do. I even decided almost from the beginning that I would go on to get my Ph.D. in China as soon as possible. After graduating from AAAOM in 2002 and passing the boards, I prepared to move to Shandong, China, with my family for two years.

L.N.: That is a huge commitment, especially when your whole family needs to be involved and support your plans. I read the article you wrote for this newsletter about your experience in China. It sounds like the first hurdle was learning Chinese.
Dr. Thao: Yes. I already spoke some Chinese, but I needed to spend four to six hours a day the first year I was there studying and reading Chinese before I could really understand the classic Chinese medicine texts. It was a lot of work just to learn the language, but the only way for me to understand Chinese culture and medicine was to live there. I learned so much in China, and the thing that impressed me most was the way they have integrated Eastern and Western medicine into one medical system. Both types of medicine are powerful and useful, and if we could learn to integrate them in this country, Americans would actually have the best health care system possible.

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L.N.: How did it go when you set up your practice?
Dr. Thao: It was a little slow at first. I was by myself in the office, except for my sister, who helped me with the office work. It took about six months to build my practice, and then I was seeing 25 to 30 patients per week. Then I decided to move to Center City in Chisago County, and I opened a second clinic there. I spent about three months doing a two-hour commute between St. Paul and Center City before I decided to close the St. Paul clinic and spend my free time at home instead of driving back and forth.

L.N.: I admire your taking risks and following your dreams. Why did you move to Center City? Weren’t you afraid that nobody there would know what acupuncture was?
Dr. Thao: I wanted to be close to nature. That means a lot to me and to my wife. We also wanted our five children to grow up in more natural surroundings. Center City is a peaceful and quiet community. People there were more receptive to acupuncture and tai chi than I thought they might be. Most people by now have heard about acupuncture from friends or have seen it on TV, no matter where they live. There are a lot of people there of Swedish descent. My acupuncture clinic, which is called Traditional Chinese Medicine Clinic, is in the Swedish Village Mall. I also rent a studio next to my clinic and teach tai chi and qi gong.

L.N.: It sounds like you have a lot going on. Besides your commitments in Center City, you are teaching Tuina classes at AAAOM this trimester.
Dr. Thao: When I was at Shandong University of TCM, I studied Tuina under Professor Wang Dao Quan. He is quite well-known and is director of the Tuina Department at Shandong. I am also a certified tai chi instructor from a school in Taiwan. In Center City I teach tai chi, qi gong, meditation, and a Chinese form of the tea ceremony.

L.N.: Do you have any free time? And if so, what do you do with it?
Dr. Thao: Even though I do a lot, I still have time for myself. I do tai chi in the woods by my house, I meditate and read, and I love to spend time with my two youngest children. When I am in nature, or treating patients, or practicing tai chi, or meditating, I feel so centered – I feel like I am more of me.
This is a very famous food in China. It is especially popular in the north of China, where it is considered suitable both for family meals and for guests. Because of the therapeutic value of green onion, this is also a medicinal food in addition to being delicious.

Ingredients:
- Green onions 1 pound
- Flour 2–3 pounds
- Vegetable oil 100–150 cc
- Salt to taste

Preparation:
1. Add water to the flour and knead together, until dough does not stick to the hand or the sides of the mixing bowl. Let the dough rest in the bowl for 20 minutes.
2. Chop green onions into small pieces.
3. With a rolling pin, roll dough into a large, flat shape, as thin as a plate.
4. Coat dough with vegetable oil, sprinkle with salt, and spread green onions evenly over the dough surface.

5. Roll dough into a tube shape. Cut this tube in half, making two equal tubes. Crimp each end of the tubes to seal them, and compress each tube into a ball shape.
6. Roll out each ball, making each into a flat, cake-like shape.
7. Add 10 ml of cooking oil to a pan and heat. Cook cakes in the pan, covering them and turning until they are brown on both sides.
8. Serve the cakes by cutting them into four sections.

Comments:
Green onion (qing cong) has the following functions which have medicinal value:
1. Clears exterior cold. Green onion soup is often used to help someone "sweat out" a cold.
2. Opens yang meridians and treats cold bi syndromes, meridian blockages, four limbs cold, and pain or swelling of joints.
3. Detoxifies food poisoning and clears intestinal infections.
4. Rub on skin to clear fungal infections.

Based on these signs and symptoms, the major TCM pattern diagnosis for hypothyroidism is Kidney Qi and Yang deficiency. Treatment involves long-term application of acupuncture and herbal medicine. The acupuncture prescription which I have found that works best with hypothyroid patients is as follows: face points EX-HN3 (Yintang) and GB 14 (Yangbai - bilateral) to stimulate the pituitary gland and regulate the secretion of thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH); ST 9 (Renyin - bilateral), to regulate the secretion of thyroid hormones T3 and T4; CV 4 and CV 6 (combined with moxa) to tonify the Qi of the body; and KI 3 and KI 6 to tonify the Kidney Yin and Yang. Tonifying techniques are used on all points.

Cautions: acupuncture and Chinese herbs can be useful as supportive therapies to improve the signs and symptoms of hypothyroidism, but they cannot replace conventional treatment. It is still very important to monitor levels of thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH) and thyroid hormones T3 and T4.
**Dates to Remember**

**AAAOM Open Houses**
Open Houses for prospective students will be held on July 13 and 20 from 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. Read more on page 3, and call 651-631-0204 with any questions and to RSVP. We hope to see you there!

**Continuing Education Seminars**
Offered by AAAOM Faculty on August 9-10 and August 16-17, topics include Understanding Pulse Condition, Ethics and Practice Management, Group Needling Technique for Pain Conditions, and Treatment of Infertility, Gynecological Disease, Diabetes, Skin Disorders, and Peripheral Neurological Diseases. Read more on page 9, and call 651-631-0204 for full details and to register.

**First Day of Fall Trimester**
The first day of classes for 2008’s Fall Trimester will be Tuesday, September 2. Applications are now being accepted and prospective students are encouraged to register early.
*For application information, please call 651-631-0204.*

**Tai Chi and Healing Qigong Classes**
AAAOM offers ongoing 10-week Healing Qigong classes on Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. beginning September 6 and 12-week Tai Chi classes on Wednesdays from 6:00 - 8:30 pm beginning September 3.
*For class and registration information, please call 651-631-0204.*