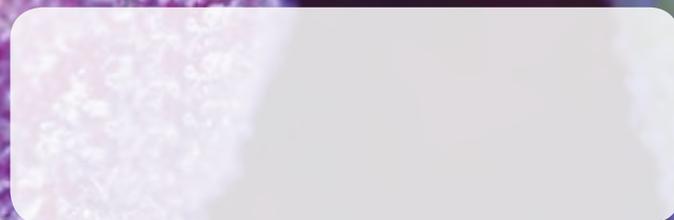


Health Action

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Guidance Counselling— Canada's Food Guide

For decades, Canada's government-promoted Food Guide for Healthy Eating has provided us with advice on how to eat. But, given rising rates of obesity and diabetes, is it meeting modern nutrition and health needs? In short, no. Alexis Costello takes a look at where Health Canada misses the opportunity

to make relevant changes to Canadian's eating patterns.

8

Natural Cold and Flu Remedies

At this time of year, it's a hot topic—preventing nasty bugs from snagging you and your loved ones. But what makes this article special? Well, these tips by naturopathic doctor Kali Maclsaac are clinically proven ways to prevent and treat cold and flu this season.

14



A Cancer Breakthrough from Traditional Chinese Medicine

The sweet wormwood compound artemisinin has undergone promising cancer research at the University of Washington. To further understand this, HANS director of operations Michael Volker went down to Seattle to do an exclusive interview with Dr. Tomikazu Sasaki.

32

Emotional Freedom Technique to Overcome Five Blocks to Love



Intimate relationships are often a source of stress. Enter emotional freedom technique (EFT), which is an exceptional way to transform stress and set us up for healthy relationships. Author and EFT advisor Heather Donaldson investigates the five blocks to love and asks some essential questions about how to develop and maintain a loving connection.

52



Powerhouse Herbs and Spices

Herbs and spices not only add intrigue and unique taste to a dish, but they also can be a powerful asset in increasing nutritive value in any meal. Here, holistic nutritionist Eden Elizabeth presents mouth-watering recipes not to be missed for both their flavour and nutritional value.

36

Also in this issue

Your Holistic Food Guide.....	12	Sleep and Technology.....	46
Strengthen Immunity in Minutes.....	18	Pain as the Gateway to Our Precious Wholeness.....	48
Take a Deep Breath and Your Heart Will Thank You.....	20	Treatment of Male Reproductive Conditions.....	50
An Eye on Heart Health.....	22	Recharge Your Adrenal Batteries.....	51
The Optimal Physical Checkup for Seniors.....	24	Free Yourself of Jealousy and Envy.....	54
The Value of Vitamin and Mineral Supplements.....	25	Reflexology Pioneer Profile: Chris Shirley.....	55
HANS Member News.....	26	Health & Green Shorts.....	56
The Most Important Anticancer Factor.....	30	Fluoride Free B.C. Update.....	58
IV Vitamin C—An Integrative Cancer Therapy.....	34	Be the Change—Without Spending Any.....	59
Intravenous Curry!.....	35	New Report: Will GM Crops Feed the World?.....	60
How Chinese Medicine Treats Mental Illness.....	40	Healthy Marketplace.....	61
Homeopathy for Depression.....	42	HANS Wellness Directory.....	62
Staying On or Coming Off Antidepressants.....	44		

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Director of Operations
Michael Volker

Executive Director
Lorna Hancock

Managing Editor
Michelle Hancock

Assistant Editor/Proofreader
Julie Cheng

Layout & Design
Annette Spreew

Contributors
Alexis Costello, Brian Davies,
Sudha M. Devi, Yvonne Dollard Perc,
Heather Donaldson, Kim Louise
Easterbrook, Brenda Eastwood,
Eden Elizabeth, Bill Jeffery, Trish
Lim-O'Donnell, Kali Maclsaac, Adam
McLeod, Rachel Mark, Bobby Parmar,
Spence Pentland, Christina Peressini,
Ingrid Pincott, Thai Siew Liang,
Chun-Kai Wang, Naomi Wolfman,
Christy Zettl

Submissions: editorial@hans.org

Letters to the editor and
requests for article references may
be sent to editorial@hans.org.
HANS reserves the right to edit
letters for space and clarity.

Health Action Network Society
214-5589 Byrne Rd., Burnaby, BC
V5J 3J1
T: (604) 435-0512 F: (604) 435-1561
www.hans.org | hans@hans.org

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How Chinese Medicine Treats Mental Illness

A whole-body approach to regaining quality of life without a lifetime of drugs

by Chun-Kai Wang,
DTCM, R.Ac

Nowadays, mental conditions are believed to be mostly an incurable disease. It is unfortunate that patients who are diagnosed with mental conditions frequently end up taking various pills for the rest of their lives. It is also staggering how many people are left disabled by this class of conditions, with the number only growing. While research has shown that mental conditions are related often to dopamine or various pharmacological imbalances in the brain, not much conventional help is actually available other than either drugs or therapy with a doctor, who often later gives drugs anyway.

From the viewpoint of Chinese medicine, most of the mental conditions encountered these days are not really “mental” conditions in the debilitating sense of the word or the stigma it carries. Chinese medicine views the problem from a more pragmatic point of view. When it comes to mental conditions, there are generally two types.

Problem of the heart

The first type is what we call problems of the heart, in other words, an emotional problem caused by an external factor such as worry, stress, grief,



finances or family. This is not pathology in itself, but unfortunately is frequently believed to be so. A person who is unhappy and depressed about his life because he only manages to get by cannot be said to have a psychological or mental condition. Yet when such situations persist, it could later develop into pathology, which leads us to the other type.

Problem of the whole body

This second type is a mental or psychological condition as a result of physical pathology, which could arise or become exacerbated as a result of the aforementioned natural stresses. As far as modern medicine goes, this physical pathology may be a pharmacological disturbance of the brain often related to some neuro-

From my clinical experience, common drug therapies for mental issues such as depression and anxiety do not work very well.

logical agent of the brain. To Chinese medicine, however, the pathology is viewed as a problem of the entire body, involving the organs, qi/energy circulation, accumulation of toxic waste materials, and any other long-standing conditions perhaps completely unrelated to the brain (to modern medicine at least).

Therefore, the brain issue is, in most instances, but only the stem, not the trunk. By dealing with the origin through

Chinese medicine, patients can usually regain their quality of life, without the need to take drugs for the rest of one's life. Here I give two examples.

Crossing the bridge with TCM

An elderly female nearing her 70s, whom we'll call Mae, sometimes needs to drive across a bridge to see her relatives on the other side of town. Her difficulty is described to be a fear out of nowhere that appears when she is driving across the bridge, and it is not related to the number of cars that happen to be driving beside her at that moment. When this sort of panic or anxiety attack comes about, her abdomen becomes rigid and the whole body turns stiff.

Mae asked if she needed counselling, but I told her to avoid jumping to conclusions so fast. Take Chinese medicine first, I suggested. I gave her a week's worth of medicine and asked her when she'll be crossing the bridge again. It turns she would be crossing the bridge around the time she finishes the herbs. A week later I followed up and was told the panic did not arise. Treatment was continued for another period of time and, to this day, after many months already without treatment, I have not heard the problem come back through my regular followups.

Panic and system issues

Another elderly female, Pat, also has panic attacks but a host of other problems. Before coming to me, she had already gone to multiple practitioners who all gave up on her. Her condition involves panic attacks that come out of nowhere without any obvious triggers and at random times throughout the day. These attacks are quite severe and I would say they feel something along the lines of extreme fear, insecurity and the feeling of utterly hitting rock bottom. There were also other systemic issues, among them sinus congestion and body pain.

To Chinese medicine, Pat's panic episodes are a result of poor circulation based on the overall picture of her case. But at the same time, her surrounding environment isn't making

Through Chinese medicine, patients can usually regain their quality of life, without the need to take drugs for the rest of one's life.

things better. After a series of treatments with Chinese medicine, acupuncture and suggestions for looking at life more positively, her condition has seen massive improvement. The panic attacks now occur very rarely with her overall health being significantly better altogether.

Be proactive

It is unfortunate there aren't more of the above types of patients who actively seek alternative therapies, since

psychological conditions are generally believed to be untreatable. Mainstream doctors tend to think this way and they tell this to patients. Subsequently, patients feel even worse when such a prognosis and label are slapped onto them. Their life may be permanently affected, while other effective avenues remain unknown to them. The label is almost like a permanent sticker that one cannot peel off. Imagine that.

From my clinical experience, common drug therapies for mental issues such as depres-

sion and anxiety do not work very well. What I've observed is that the longer patients are subject to these drugs, the more dull they become, while the plethora of other systemic issues affecting them remain unaddressed. But with the current medical system, it's likely we will continue seeing such unfortunate scenarios as the norm. Robin William's recent case is just one of many other examples health authorities may or may not have paid attention to. 🌱

Chun-Kai Wang, DTCM, R.Ac, is a doctor of traditional Chinese medicine and registered acupuncturist who uses Chinese herbal medicine and acupuncture to treat complex systemic conditions. He also teaches Chinese medicine at PCU College of Holistic Medicine. www.drwang.ca | (604) 836-3968



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