

# Oriental Medicine and Herbal Acupuncture Therapy in the 21st Century

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Korean traditional medicine is closely related to Traditional Chinese medicine and it has been developed through years of trial and error. Ranging from chronic diseases to geriatric diseases, traditional medicine has been showing superb efficacy. But we are living in a scientific world which requires reproducibility, and scientific research is mandatory for standardizing Oriental medicine.

Recent scientific researches pertaining to Oriental medicine have been focused on analyzing constituents of the traditional herbs and proving the efficacy of acupuncture therapy. In a sense, these researches nonetheless enhanced acceptance of Oriental medicine in the

science community, but one may fear these findings are applied in the western medical field and Oriental medicine only provides the source. In other words, we may be turning Oriental medicine into alternative medicine in the eyes of the western medicine.

Oriental medicine's essence of viewing the human body as wholeness may be disregarded and these scientific researches may just ignore Oriental medicine's yin/yang theory and other traditional knowledges. For example, 1) collapse of taste, temperature, and meridian pathway theory of herbal medicine, 2) extinction of pharmacological action of herbs, 3) dismantling of

meridian theory, 4) problems associated with classification of disorders in regards with differentiation of syndromes, 5) dismantling of five element theory with inter-promoting and counteracting, and etc.

To modernize Oriental medicine, it is necessary to step out of the traditional boundary. We need to devise a new research scheme that retains traditional paradigm of Oriental medicine rather than following the standard scientific methods. Scientific research is not just limited to analyzing materials. Experienced diagnosis accompanied with systemized treatment method to raise the treatment efficacy is another way to implement science into Oriental medicine.

Oriental medicine in the 21st century should be concentrated on 1) maintaining a view on life and disease with harmony between the nature and human, 2) formation of interpretation with cerebral action, 3) Yin/yang, five element, Sasang constitutional medicine, and molecular biological interpretation, and 4) humanistic way of treatment.

There is a tendency that acupuncture

is just a folk medicine and non-scientific among the general public. But despite lacking scientific proof, no one can deny the efficacy of Oriental medicine in successful treatments. World Health Organization already recognized excellency of acupuncture treatment.

Making correct diagnosis in the medicine is very difficult. Western medicine can be defined as artificially controlling the human body whereas Oriental medicine concentrates on building natural recovery of the body. We should not be discussing the advantages of each medicine, but must focus on applying best of both worlds in providing better treatment for the patient. This requires specific investigation to practice both medical modes in accordance.

Herbal acupuncture is relatively a new treatment method that is based on the meridian theory and instead of applying heavy manipulation of the needle, small amount of the herbal extract is injected to maximize the natural healing power. One notable aspect of this treatment procedure is that not only the efficacy of herbal extract is concerned, but also

possesses taste and temperature characteristics, eight principals, and varied depending on the body constitution. Herbal acupuncture has peculiarities of Oriental medicine and provides speedy treatment efficacy by injecting directly on the affected area for immediate result in emergency cases. It can be applied to various diseases and has tremendous potential for developing the herbal extracts. However, the herbal acupuncture still faces numerous obstacles.

Safe injection method, safeness of the herbal extract, and side effects must be thoroughly studied in the future. These studies must be done within the boundary of health and pharmaceutical affairs law, and provide platform for further expansion of Oriental medicine. Thus, I hereby would like to present specific items to be evaluated at the levels of academical society, college, and practitioners.