

Comparison of the Professional Education Model of Acupuncture -Moxibustion in Domestic and Abroad

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Abstract: Combining with the development of domestic and foreign education in acupuncture - moxibustion, this article analyzed and summarized the difference from the college setting, training objectives, enrollment requirements, the length of schooling and teaching hours, teaching materials, curriculum setting, clinical practical teaching, etc. Based on the principle of reserving characteristics of traditional Chinese medicine, this article suggested that we should learn from foreign experience and the advantages to push forward the reform and innovation of the professional education mode of acupuncture – moxibustion.

On January 18th, 2017, President Xi Jinping visited the WHO and presented the bronze sculpture of acupuncture and moxibustion, which indicates that acupuncture has been increasingly recognized at home and abroad and played an important role in international exchanges. With the development of acupuncture overseas, the condition of acupuncture education varies in different countries according to their national conditions. In order to provide reference for the traditional Chinese medicine teaching at home, and to provide the reference for development of overseas' traditional Chinese medicine teaching and cooperation of China, this article compares the characteristics of acupuncture and moxibustion education, especially in the aspects of college setting, training objectives, enrollment requirements, the length of schooling and teaching hours, teaching materials, curriculum setting, and practical teaching mode to explore the current education situation of acupuncture and moxibustion at home and abroad.

1. Professional Development of Acupuncture and Moxibustion at Home and Abroad

Acupuncture, as a part of traditional Chinese medicine, proceeds with the development of traditional Chinese medicine to the world. When it comes to acupuncture education in traditional Chinese medicine, mostly in foreign countries it starts with the mode of inheritance from master to apprentice, then goes with short-term education or amateur training, and finally develops into formal degree education. For example, in developed countries led by the United States, after nearly half a century of development, the education system of acupuncture has begun to take shape, among which the powerful colleges and universities have also established master's and doctoral degree courses related to acupuncture^[1]. However, the acupuncture education in some countries is still at its preliminary stage. In Netherlands, for example, acupuncture is only a supplementary course to medicine while even presently, there is no school that can provide postgraduate courses of acupuncture, and neither are formal acupuncture medical institutions. Admittedly, the government does not pay enough attention^[2] that led to the slow development. Most of the acupuncture education in foreign countries starts from private tutoring, and then gradually obtains the recognition from the government. Finally, acupuncture education expands fastly and is included in the national medical system. This growth is inseparable from the support of the government and the

efforts of foreign enthusiasts of TCM, which is also a huge impetus driving force for the development of TCM. In China, the formal academic education of traditional Chinese medicine has gone through more than half a century. It is also faced with the reform and development of acupuncture education of Traditional Chinese Medicine and how to maintain the traditional characteristics of traditional Chinese medicine. The support from government is undoubtedly important, but the key to the development of traditional Chinese medicine lies in whether to maintain and develop characteristic traditional Chinese medicine^[3].

2. Comparison of Training Modes of Acupuncture Professionals at Home and Abroad

The Setting of Institutions. In terms of the setting of institutions, the situation abroad can be roughly divided into three categories: ① Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) has acquired its legal status, and there are specialized Traditional Chinese Medicine schools or comprehensive universities offering acupuncture and moxibustion majors, such as Singapore and Malaysia. Singapore currently has three formal institutions of traditional Chinese medicine, namely: Singapore College of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Academy of Chinese Medicine, and Singapore Nanyang Technological University. The undergraduate professional courses offered by these three institutions involve acupuncture education and are accredited by the Chinese Medicine Management Committee. Therefore, the students there have the examination qualifications for acupuncturists after graduation^[4]. In Malaysia, Traditional Chinese Medicine and acupuncture education have been more than half a century. The main methods of training physicians of Traditional Chinese Medicine and acupuncturists are establishing cooperation between the traditional colleges in Malaysia and the TCM universities in China, setting up the 3+2 or 4+1 pattern courses and carrying out the undergraduate courses education on the majors of “Chinese medicine” and “acupuncture and tuina”^[5]. ② The status of TCM is legalized, but there is no special acupuncture education institutions. Acupuncture education is mainly contained in the teaching of Traditional Chinese Medicine or exists in the form of short-term courses, such as Thailand and Brazil. In Thailand, the social status of acupuncture is relatively low because there is no special acupuncture education institutions. And the government hasn’t yet set up any regulations on acupuncture education. It can only be integrated in the teaching of TCM^[6]. In Brazil, universities can offer acupuncture courses, but no any acupuncture colleges or universities can provide bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral education temporarily, which greatly hinders the development of acupuncture^[7]. ③ The status of TCM hasn’t been legalized and the acupuncture education institutions are mainly private, such as the United Kingdom and Portugal. In Britain, TCM hasn’t got the official recognition. Therefore, those relevant TCM schools are controlled and regulated by TCM and Acupuncture certification authority^[8], which is conducive for the acupuncture education to take a further step towards legalization. In Portugal, there are three influential universities offering the undergraduate teaching of TCM, namely “Pedro Choy/Cai Baode University of TCM, “Claudino Gomes/Lisbon High School of Chinese Medicine” and “University of Porto”. In addition, the institutions such as acupuncture and moxibustion associations in Portugal, ISLA, Instituto Piaget, and Biomedical Sciences Academy of the university of Porto all set postgraduate courses in acupuncture and moxibustion. At present, the Portuguese Parliament has passed the legislation draft on acupuncture, without formal legal texts, which also indicates that acupuncture and moxibustion has been valued in Portugal and has been closer to the status of legalization^[9].

In China, Acupuncture major is usually divided into junior college students’ education, undergraduate and postgraduate education. It is set up in all TCM colleges and universities, but there also exists the educational mode of continuing education and short-term acupuncture training. The social demands for TCM and acupuncture has promoted the development of the clinical education on TCM acupuncture. In the meantime, the relevant laws and regulations also provide legal protection for acupuncture education. But whatever the form of acupuncture education is, it all needs government support for getting rapid development.

Comparison of the Talents Training Objectives and the Student Sources. In terms of talent

training, the goals of different countries are not the same. In China, acupuncture education mainly aims to cultivate the acupuncture talents who are proficient in acupuncture, master knowledge of Chinese Medicine and comprehend some knowledge of western medicine. But with the implementation of the clinical training system for TCM residents, the contents of the TCM practitioner's examination may become the focus of education and gradually become the teaching objectives. However, in America, the teaching objectives of TCM college are very clear. No matter on the aspect of the setting of acupuncture courses or on the aspect of practical teaching courses, they are all set up around the certification examination requirements of the California Acupuncture Board and the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM)^[10]. The acupuncture training objective in Canada is consistent with America, that is, to pass certification exams and practice medicine independently. This objective is related to the choice of Canadian graduates, since most of graduate students in Canada have few opportunities to work in the hospital or large treatment center, while mostly in private clinics^[11].

By comparison, the education goal in China is mainly for training all-round talents, while it is mainly for training the specialized talents in America and Canada. However, from the development trend of acupuncture education, it is still worth pondering that whether it is beneficial to the development of acupuncture and whether it is beneficial to the development of acupuncture talents.

In terms of admission requirements and the student source, Acupuncture students in China mainly come from the annual national unified college entrance examination. Through this examination, students' exam results must reach to the undergraduate admission score line. And then they can select their majors according to their own will. After getting admitted, they will take the professional study of acupuncture. In this way, it guarantees the student's quality from the aspects of intelligence, physique and so on. While, in America, there is no strict admission requirements. The students' background is complex or complicated. Most of them come from acupuncturists, west medicine doctors, nurses, and some of them have great interests on acupuncture. In Britain, the admission qualifications of TCM colleges or universities are different. Some colleges or universities require high school diploma, and some require more than two-year degree of college or university. Most of acupuncturists are local western medicine doctors and the practitioners of naturopathy. They only have short-term training, mastering the theories and function of primary TCM and then practice medicine^[12]. The student source in Germany has two main types: western medicine doctors, and naturopathic therapists. Their study is mainly based on practical technology, ignoring the basic theory of TCM, which is quite different from the domestic educational concept on acupuncture^[13].

Compared with the source of Chinese students, foreign students are relatively complicated. Most of them are western medicine doctors, or the staffs who are working on naturopathy, or the people who change their jobs halfway out of interest. On the one hand, it indicates that acupuncture can be accepted gradually by overseas people. But on the other hand, since most of acupuncture students are western doctors who have a fixed thinking mode of western medicine, whether they can absorb the concepts such as "syndrome differentiation and treatment", "holism concepts" of TCM during their study is a very important issue in acupuncture clinical practice and acupuncture education.

Comparison of School System and Teaching Hours. In China, the duration of acupuncture education system is divided into three, five and eight years, corresponding to junior college, undergraduate and postgraduate education. The curriculum of each TCM College is not identical, and the teaching hours may be various, but overall, the proportion of Western medicine and traditional Chinese medicine in educational system is relatively reasonable.

In the United States, the length of schooling in the College of traditional Chinese medicine is generally three years during which the theoretical courses include Traditional Chinese Medicine and modern medicine, covering about 2000 to 3000 teaching hours, as well as 500 to 800 teaching hours of clinical practice^[14]. In Australia, the setting of acupuncture courses and credit hours is decided by each TCM colleges independently because there is no standard, and the length of schooling varies from 3 to 5 years, thus leading to the different actual levels of each school in acupuncture education^[15]. In France, the length of schooling is 3 years, with no less than 360 credit hours. Generally speaking, there are total 448 credit hours for basic acupuncture and clinical acupuncture

accounting respectively for 224 hours^[16]. In Switzerland, there are 3 TCM education institutions recognized by the Education Department of the government, with a length of schooling of 3 years^[17]. The duration for educational system of acupuncture school in Japan is generally 3 years, while that for the schooling arrangements of acupuncture is 4 years with the theoretical class hours varying from 2250 to 2350, in which the courses for western medicine account for more than 40 percent of the total teaching hours, which accounts for a larger proportion compared with the theoretical courses of traditional Chinese medicine because the latter accounts for 10 % to 16.6% of the total teaching hours. In addition, the acupuncture education in Japan pays special attention to the training of clinical skill, which is mainly reflected in the courses of acupuncture practice, finger pressure, massage. The total number of courses accounts for about 37 % of the total^[18]. In UK, the duration of acupuncture and moxibustion in colleges and universities of Traditional Chinese Medicine recognized by BAAB and EHPA is generally 3 years with 3000 teaching hours^[8].

Compared with China, the educational system and credit hours of foreign colleges and universities are different. The duration in foreign schools is mainly three years, with different class hours for different institutes. But generally speaking, most of the foreign acupuncture education focuses on skills and neglects theory. For example, countries such as the United States, Japan and Germany pay more attention to the cultivation of skills and practicality, and the class hours of theoretical education is less than that of domestic acupuncture education. Although there are some disadvantages for skills training, it is also worth our reference. In the reform of acupuncture education, we can pay attention to this aspect of training and strengthen the ability for acupuncture talents.

Comparison of Teaching Materials and Curriculum.In China, the curriculum and teaching materials in various colleges and universities are jointly guided by the Ministry of education and the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine, but most colleges and universities make their own teaching plans according to the actual situation. For example, in terms of 5-year bachelor courses, the proportion of traditional Chinese medicine, western medicine and public courses is respectively approximately 40 %, 30% and 30%, while the duration of clinical practice time is 1 year or 1.5 years. In addition, some colleges and universities have also established minor courses and elective courses.

When it comes to textbook, at present, the textbooks of acupuncture and moxibustion used by Korean medical universities are common-used ones compiled by the Textbook Compilation Committee of Korean acupuncture and Moxibustion Association, and the corresponding training courses including special practical teaching materials such as *Illustrated Classics and acupoints, Acupuncture and Moxibustion*. The content of the practical training course is orderly carried out according to the course content, mainly including the distribution of meridians and collaterals, the location of acupoints, acupuncture equipment and fingering operation and training^[19]. However, there are no special practical teaching materials in China, which are generally based on the contents of "Science of Meridian and Acupoint" and "Science of acupuncture moxibustion", or the auxiliary teaching with image data. In the UK, majority of the English-Chinese comparative textbooks introduced from China are mainly related to the basic theory of acupuncture and moxibustion in Traditional Chinese Medicine, lacking of deeper contents^[12]. The basic teaching materials of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Canada come mainly from fifth edition teaching materials of Chinese universities. However, the education of acupuncture and moxibustion in Traditional Chinese Medicine in Canada, covers first aid, referral, management, medical ethics, medical laws and regulations and other courses, with more emphasis on practicality^[11,20]. In Japanese schools concerned about acupuncture, there are no classical medical books, such as *Neijing, treatise on cold attack* and so on. In terms of teaching acupuncture techniques, there is no introduction of the following methods as opening and closing, tonifying and reducing. Despite the names of 17 techniques, there is a lack of materials on their significance and classical background^[18].

Compared with foreign acupuncture textbooks, Chinese ones are compiled on the basis of classic ancient books of Traditional Chinese Medicine, while majority of foreign ones are directly translated from Chinese acupuncture textbooks. Besides, there are also translating issues, such as

the definition of terms like "Yin and Yang" as well as "five elements". Inevitably, it is challenge for foreign students to understand these abstract terms, meanwhile it is also a challenge for the development of foreign acupuncture education. Therefore, the relevant departments should actively organize the compilation of foreign acupuncture textbooks with superior quality. In terms of curriculum, acupuncture teaching in some countries does not rely on classic courses, such as Japan, which is relatively simple and not conducive to the further development of acupuncture. In addition, we can learn from the experience of Canada and the United Kingdom in developing courses, paying attention to the practicality of teaching courses, and establishing relevant courses in business clinics, medical laws and regulations, so that the concept of legal and independent medical practice can be reflected in the curriculum, which is conducive to the overall development of students.

Comparison of Clinical Practice Teaching.In China, at present, the practice of acupuncture and massage in colleges and universities of traditional Chinese medicine is carried out in the affiliated hospitals of colleges and universities. A few of them adopt the principle of self-sufficiency that means colleges or universities of Traditional Chinese Medicine seek intern hospitals by themselves. The duration of intern is about one year.

Most of foreign acupuncture education lacks practice bases. Some colleges and universities can provide practice bases, while some countries cooperate with University of Traditional Chinese Medicine in China. For example, in Australia, only three universities, Victoria University of science and technology, Sydney University of science and technology and Royal Melbourne University of science and Technology, have their own clinical hospitals, which can provide clinical internships for students. However, most colleges and universities lack of clinical practice bases, for which students could not acquire clinical training of traditional Chinese medicine^[15]. Schools in Canada specialized in Traditional Chinese Medicine acupuncture are small in scale, and students have little chance to go to large hospitals or treatment centers for internships. It is difficult to come across the serious diseases described in the textbooks while the mild diseases could be mostly seen in school internship. At the same time, Canadian students do not have one-year off-duty, rotating internship in various subjects, or specialized internship for the time being. Therefore, some colleges and universities are engaged to shorten the gap by cooperating with Chinese medical colleges or universities, arranging students for internship in China^[11].

The clinical intern teaching of acupuncture and moxibustion in foreign countries has its limitations, which is also the bottleneck during the growing of overseas education for acupuncture and moxibustion. Only in this way can we ensure the healthy development of acupuncture education. Strengthening the communication with domestic Chinese hospitals and colleges foster students to learn more types of diseases, and also have the opportunity to operate independently ,thus enriching their clinical experience. Meanwhile, the practical teaching in China also requires further reform,including strengthening hospital management, focusing on cultivating students' ability of independent consultation, improving clinical skills, and having a variety of careers options after graduation.

3. Summary

By comparing the development of acupuncture and moxibustion at home and abroad, it turns out that foreign countries see more advancements in acupuncture and moxibustion, but there are still some problems. The development of acupuncture in overseas countries is hindered by the differences in national conditions, policies, languages,as well as western medicine's doubts on acupuncture. However, with the continuous expansion of China's international influence, it is believed that acupuncture will be gradually recognized by the world, and the overseas teaching system will be more inclusive. After years of exploration and innovation in acupuncture education in China, its curriculum system has been gradually improved. With the combination of reform and innovation, we can learn teaching methodology from foreign education, at the same time, we can choose our own teaching mode, following the social rule. It is also hoped that through the "belt and road" Initiative, cooperation will be carried out in multiple dimensions, channels and levels to show the unique charm of acupuncture to the world and contribute to the maintenance of human health^[21].

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