

## *Traditional Chinese Medicine*

Oriental Medicine (OM) pre-dates modern western medicine by more than a thousand years. It has grown and developed into a comprehensive health care system with a continuous history of over 2,300 years. Today Oriental medicine is widespread and has touched every part of the world. Under the vast umbrella of Oriental Medicine there are numerous schools of philosophies and different approaches on how to practice. Among these different philosophies are Chinese, Japanese; Korean..

The majority of acupuncture schools in the United States base their teachings on the Chinese medical philosophies known as Traditional Chinese Medicine (or TCM for short). More books are written and translated on Traditional Chinese Medicine than any of the other styles combined.

Traditional Chinese Medicine is the result of generations of doctors, scholars, martial artists, and monks observing both the principles of the natural law of nature, as well as the different phases of life's natural cycles: **Change, Growth, Balance, and Harmony.**

Traditional Chinese Medicine is a complex and natural method of medicine. The goal of Traditional Chinese Medicine is to seek harmony and balance between the mind and the body, and also to enable the body's natural ability to function and regulate itself.

The mind and body share a very powerful connection. Even today, with all the technologies we have, scientists tell us we only use a very small percentage of our brain. Traditional Chinese Medicine has been observing the symbiotic connection between our minds and our emotions for over 2,300 years. We are all emotional beings, and in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) we look carefully at how emotions can affect the body, with either a positive response, or a negative stress that can throw the mind and body out of balance. It is believed in Traditional Chinese Medicine that anything can cause the body harm if it is in excess.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) offers a holistic approach to health that emphasizes a person's health as a unified whole, as opposed to focusing on one particular symptom or disease. Traditional Chinese Medicine aims to treat the root cause of symptoms as well as the branch problems which are specific and unique to each individual. How does this work in TCM? Think of a tree. You have the roots underground and the branches up top. A tree needs sunlight, good soil, and water. If you were to only give it sunlight and not soil or water you will not have very much success helping the tree grow and thrive. In Traditional Chinese Medicine it works this way; treating only a specific symptom is not the best way to help your mind and body thrive and heal. If we can relax the body as a whole, decrease the negative stress on the mind and the body as a whole, we can make a positive change to many aspects of the body, bringing it into a much better state of balance.

Traditional Chinese Medicine benefits the body in these following ways:

- **Promotes health and well-being for both mental and physical conditions simultaneously.**
- **Its immediate effects include a sense of well-being and relaxation as well as an overall sense of peace.**
- **Helps boost and nourish the body's immune system.**
- **Treats multiple illnesses' based on generations of clinical experience.**

- Serves as a **general balancing treatment, treating not only symptoms, but also the root cause of those symptoms.**
- **General calming and relaxation of the body allows it to be better able to respond to other forms of treatment**

The Complete practice of Traditional Chinese Medicine includes:

- Acupuncture
- Herbal Therapy
- Tuina Chinese medical massage
- QiGong – Breathing and stretching exercises which increase oxygen and blood flow to the body as well as to help increase range of motion to the joints.
- Nutritional recommendations and Lifestyle counseling

### **What is Acupuncture?**

Acupuncture is one of the modalities of Traditional Chinese Medicine. Acupuncture consists of the insertion of extremely fine, sterile, stainless steel needles into certain locations on the body at specific points shown to be effective in the treatment of specific health problems.

These points have been mapped by the Traditional Chinese Medicine doctors and martial artist for over 2,300 years, and there are more than 1,000 known acupuncture points. In the past three decades electromagnetic research has confirmed the existence and location of these points. The points are like switches on a circuit breaker for regulating and balancing the body.

### **How does Acupuncture work?**

Modern Western medicine cannot yet explain how acupuncture works. Acupuncture is based on ancient theories of the flow of qi (a fine, essential substance which nourishes and constructs the body) through distinct channels that cover the body somewhat like nerves and blood vessels. According to this theory, acupuncture adjusts the flow of qi in the body, leading it to areas where it is insufficient and draining it from areas where it is stuck and / or overly abundant. In this way, acupuncture restores the harmonious balance of the body and its parts. In Chinese, there is a saying, “if there is pain, there is no free flow: if there is free flow, there is no pain.” Acupuncture promotes and reestablishes the free flow of qi.

### **Does it hurt**

Acupuncture needles are typically not much thicker than a hair, and their insertion is practically painless. It is nothing like receiving an ordinary injection. In some cases, you will not even know the needles are in place. In others, there may be some tingling, warmth, heaviness, or a feeling of the qi moving up and down the channels. Most people find acupuncture extremely relaxing, and many fall asleep during treatment.

### **What is Chinese Herbal Medicine?**

Chinese Herbal Medicine is the main modality or treatment method within Oriental Medicine. As mentioned previously, it has been practiced in the Peoples Republic of China for thousands of years. Although acupuncture was the first Oriental modality to gain wide spread acceptance in the West, Chinese herbal medicine is now also rapidly establishing itself as one of the most popular and effective alternative therapies in the West.

### **Can Chinese herbal medicine be used at the same time as Western Medicine?**

Research in China suggests that the combination of Chinese and Western medicine for a health condition is better and more effective than either one is alone. When one combines Chinese and Western medicines one gets all the power and speed of Western pharmaceutical products, while typically requiring a lower dose and fewer different medications. In addition, the Chinese medicine is commonly able to eliminate any side effects of the Western medications. Side effects come from forcing one part of the body to behave while causing an imbalance in some other part.

***Caution: The improper use of Chinese Herbal Medicine can be dangerous. Please consult with a licensed acupuncturist before taking any herbal products.***

### **What is Traditional Chinese Medicine good for?**

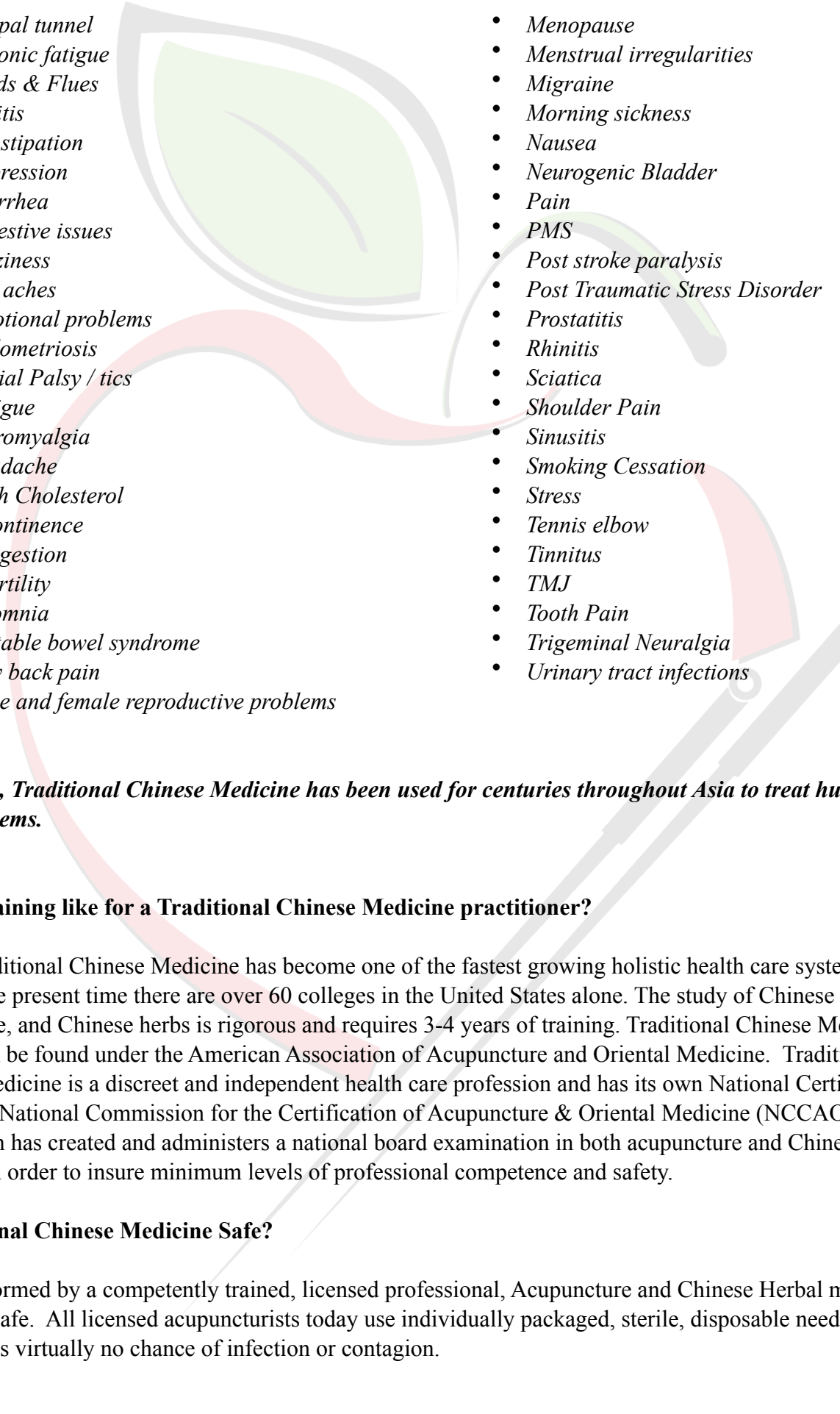
Traditional Chinese Medicine treats the full range of human disease. It treats pain, acute diseases, like intestinal flu and the common cold, as well as chronic diseases, such as allergies, gynecological disorders, auto-immune diseases, chronic viral diseases, and degenerative diseases associated with aging.

Over the last several years many hospitals and universities across the country, as well as the United States Military have been doing studies on the positive effects of acupuncture. Many of these hospitals have also created integrated healing centers inside their hospital setting, so patients can receive conventional medicine and Traditional Chinese Medicine in one place. The integration of the two medicines has opened the door for patients to receive the best of both worlds. Included among the hospitals that have integrated Traditional Chinese Medicine are; Duke Medical University, Thomas Jefferson Hospital, and Johns Hopkins Medical Center.

Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine is recognized by the National Institute of Health (NIH), Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) and the World Health Organization (WHO) to be effective in the treatment for over 40 common disorders.

### **Some problems commonly treated by Traditional Chinese Medicine are?**

- *Addiction*
- *Allergies*
- *Anxiety*
- *Arthritis*
- *Asthma*
- *Bronchitis*

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- *Carpal tunnel*
  - *Chronic fatigue*
  - *Colds & Flues*
  - *Colitis*
  - *Constipation*
  - *Depression*
  - *Diarrhea*
  - *Digestive issues*
  - *Dizziness*
  - *Ear aches*
  - *Emotional problems*
  - *Endometriosis*
  - *Facial Palsy / tics*
  - *Fatigue*
  - *Fibromyalgia*
  - *Headache*
  - *High Cholesterol*
  - *Incontinence*
  - *Indigestion*
  - *Infertility*
  - *Insomnia*
  - *Irritable bowel syndrome*
  - *Low back pain*
  - *Male and female reproductive problems*
  - *Menopause*
  - *Menstrual irregularities*
  - *Migraine*
  - *Morning sickness*
  - *Nausea*
  - *Neurogenic Bladder*
  - *Pain*
  - *PMS*
  - *Post stroke paralysis*
  - *Post Traumatic Stress Disorder*
  - *Prostatitis*
  - *Rhinitis*
  - *Sciatica*
  - *Shoulder Pain*
  - *Sinusitis*
  - *Smoking Cessation*
  - *Stress*
  - *Tennis elbow*
  - *Tinnitus*
  - *TMJ*
  - *Tooth Pain*
  - *Trigeminal Neuralgia*
  - *Urinary tract infections*

***In addition, Traditional Chinese Medicine has been used for centuries throughout Asia to treat hundreds of other problems.***

### **What is training like for a Traditional Chinese Medicine practitioner?**

Today, Traditional Chinese Medicine has become one of the fastest growing holistic health care systems in the West. At the present time there are over 60 colleges in the United States alone. The study of Chinese medicine, acupuncture, and Chinese herbs is rigorous and requires 3-4 years of training. Traditional Chinese Medicine schools can be found under the American Association of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine. Traditional Chinese Medicine is a discreet and independent health care profession and has its own National Certification board. The National Commission for the Certification of Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM). This commission has created and administers a national board examination in both acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine in order to insure minimum levels of professional competence and safety.

### **Is Traditional Chinese Medicine Safe?**

When performed by a competently trained, licensed professional, Acupuncture and Chinese Herbal medicine is extremely safe. All licensed acupuncturists today use individually packaged, sterile, disposable needles. That way, there is virtually no chance of infection or contagion.

## **How many treatments will I need?**

The answer depends on the duration, severity, and nature of your complaint. You may need only a single treatment for an acute condition. A series of 6-24 treatments may resolve many chronic problems. Some degenerative conditions may require many treatments over time. To help reduce the number of treatments, your practitioner may suggest herbal medicine to help increase the efficacy of the acupuncture treatment.

In acute conditions, results with herbal medicine can be expected in a matter of minutes. In chronic conditions, some results should be seen within two weeks. Although chronic conditions may require taking Chinese herbal medicine for a long time, signs that the medicine is working should be apparent to both the patient and their practitioner almost from the very start.

## **Does Chinese herbal medicine have side effects?**

There can be side effects from anything, however if the formula has been correctly chosen and properly applied by a trained Traditional Chinese Medicine practitioner, according to a correct Oriental Medicine pattern diagnosis, there should be no negative side effects, only beneficial healing results. If a patient experiences any discomfort while taking Chinese herbs, they should tell their practitioner immediately. The practitioner will then modify their formula accordingly. Most of the medicinal ingredients in the Chinese material medica have a very low toxicity compared to common, over the counter Western drugs.

If you are looking for away to improve your overall health and wellness and are looking for a safe, effective, and chemical free way to improve your well-being, give Traditional Chinese Medicine a try today.

## **Barry L. Gommer Jr., L.Ac. Dipl. Ac (NCCAOM)**

Barry has a Masters degree in Traditional Chinese Medicine and is a licensed Acupuncturist in the State of Delaware. Barry is board certified in Acupuncture by the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine ([www.nccaom.org](http://www.nccaom.org)) He also holds several certifications in Oriental Medical Massage, including Tuina.

Good health and longevity starts with a strong foundation. Dedicating his life to the study of the all the Asian healing arts, Barry is always learning and studying whatever he can to enhance the art and practice of Traditional Chinese Medicine. Barry's extensive background in martial arts, Dit Da, Chinese medicine, exercise, nutrition, massage and Tuina gives him a unique way of approaching the whole mind and body for better health and wellness into his practice to help each and every person he treats improve their overall mind and body health, thus enhancing their quality of life.

Over the years Barry has treated thousands of patients with Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese medicine including a new born that was a month old to professional athletes and even a German Shepard.

Barry has written numerous articles on the complex and natural method of Traditional Chinese Medicine. He lectures frequently on the subject of Traditional Chinese medicine.

At his clinic in Newark Delaware not only does he practice Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine, along with nutrition, but he also teaches small groups and private lessons in Qigong, meditation and Kung Fu. His goal is to bring balance and harmony to the mind and body enabling the body's natural ability to function and regulate itself better. Barry can be reached at 302-273-2807 or by email at

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