

The Acumedic Centre takes medicine into the 21st century

# Pinpointing a healthy future

At first glance, Traditional Chinese Medicine, which incorporates acupuncture, herbology and a range of analgesic therapies, seems to be in the peak of health. Of the alternative therapies Traditional Chinese Medicine perhaps the most successful both commercially, and more importantly, medically.

However, despite the prospects of a rosy future, TCM is starting to see the first signs of a malaise of identity and ideals. The doctors and staff at the Acumedic Centre in Camden Town are striving to cure this malaise in order to take medicine into the 21st century. It is sad to think that whenever a good idea is exposed to market forces, the original idea is to adapt to the conditions of the paying public and less than scrupulous entrepreneurs.

Inevitably, this is starting to happen in this field of Chinese Medicine. All in London, and throughout the city, there has been a proliferation of these medicine practices and dispensers.

A number of these are run by business men, not fully qualified physicians, and to what the public want to see, such as a facade of interesting looking herbs, and of what would be best for the test.

More likely than not, the service and when offered are well below standard if not completely expensive.

In terms of service to the patient, medicine's reputation is irreparable, or at least in inception, only fully qualified English-speaking doctors from inland China have been allowed to treat patients. This means that the specialist, herbologist or acupuncturist (Chinese massage-osteopaths) had at least four years' training in their own medicine, and at least two years' Western Medicine.

Indeed, the treatment one receives at a Acumedic Centre is more or less the treatment that one would expect to find in a TCM hospital in any large city in China.

As Benny Mei, one of Acumedic's acupuncturists, is eager to point out: "We are a Chinese Herbal Pharmacy." Paraphrasing, it also, the Acumedic Centre, has developed into the main of pure TCM treatment in Europe. The other major problems that exist in TCM in this country is how to integrate acupuncture and herbology - practiced by the person on the street, informally, despite widespread publicity, most people are sceptical or afraid. Many people who have never had any first-hand experience of TCM

are still prepared to rely on cultural and racial stereotypes to do down the work of clinics such as the Acumedic Centre.

Such images of the Chinese as being inscrutable, mysterious and lost in a world of incomprehensible traditions are applied to a science that pre-lauds Western medicine by over a thousand years.

This is of course a matter of educating the general public, but for the Acumedic Centre, this narrow-mindedness is a huge obstacle to the progress of its work within the community.

Traditional Chinese Medicine is by no means the imagination such is the myth, and the Acumedic Centre is a living, functional proof of this. What the Acumedic Centre stands in a class of its own is in the way it wholeheartedly believes in integrating all available techniques of Chinese Medicine and combining these with the best aspects of Western Medicine.

What one must understand is that the doctors at Acumedic have a profound working knowledge of both fields of medicine. This means that they are in a position to assess what would be best for the patient. For example, if a patient goes to Acumedic complaining of a long standing sore throat, the doctor might well send the patient packing to a GP to cure the symptoms of the sore throat, but then the doctor would want the patient to be in the condition, which might be a more time-consuming process.

In bringing Eastern and Western medicine together, the Acumedic Centre's work has been nothing short of pioneering. Among the many breakthroughs achieved in this modest looking clinic in Camden High Street, there is the simple success of depositing acupuncture needles. The Centre's work has attracted



● Benny Mei and the team at Acumedic

international attention on both corporate and governmental levels. Through the efforts of Acumedic, stronger links are being forged with the medical establishment in China at the highest levels, and as an international organisation, Acumedic has already made its mark into the States with a centre in New York.

Acumedic has an intention to overthrow established views on medicine. Rather, Acumedic as a whole is trying to get Traditional Chinese Medicine accepted for what it is, another piece in the jigsaw of medical health care.

In the Taoist style, they have started this great journey with a small first step. The Acumedic Centre, situated at 101 Camden High Street, is not only a clinic, but a treasure store of information.

The host of the premises is given over to a bookshop, selling literature to everyone, from the idly interested to textbooks for the student and practitioner of Traditional Chinese Medicine. This means the bookshop covers other fields of alternative medicine, such as homopathy, Western herbology and osteopathy. The staff can give an informed recommendation of simple treatments like Tiger Balm, tincture, tea and oils are also on sale. Acumedic plan to publish a series of booklets for distribution at other health clinics for the public.

Ultimately, Acumedic's work with the community is

aimed at re-educating the public in their attitudes towards health and the role of Traditional Chinese Medicine in modern health care.

Time to these very same principles, the Acumedic Centre, headed by a group of administrators like Mei Mei, are trying to catch the illness which is devastating the integrity and progress of the Chinese Medical profession in its early stages.

For the charlatans, big game and the misguided, the medicine will be bitter. For others it will be invigorating and potent. Ultimately, with the knowledge of three thousand years of medical tradition, combined with the expertise of Western medicine, the Acumedic Centre - the White Knights of alternative medicine - are preparing to change people's attitudes towards medicine, in order to lead us into a healthier 21st century.



De Lily Hsu Yu removing an acupuncture needle after treatment.



Dr Wang Ling conducting a tongue and pulse diagnosis



## AcuMedic

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