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Global Times (China)

September 20, 2018 Thursday

**TCM expansion in Kazakhstan**

**BYLINE:** Global Times

**LENGTH:** 990 words

A Kazakh (left) learns **cupping** therapy from a teacher at a medical school in Northwest China's Shaanxi Province. File photo: IC

Kazakhstan, the Central Asian country where Chinese leaders put forward the Belt and Road initiative, is now witnessing the popularization of **traditional** **Chinese** **medicine** (TCM). The rising popularity is mostly thanks to the wider acceptance of TCM, as local perceptions of healthcare have shifted from being treatment-focused to prevention-driven, which is in line with TCM philosophy. While a number of domestic TCM manufacturers aim to tap Kazakhstan's huge market, industry insiders are warning of several hurdles in terms of legal application and cultural acceptance. **Traditional** **Chinese** **medicine** (TCM), such as **acupuncture**, **cupping,** scraping therapy as well as herbal medicine, is now appealing to more and more patients in Kazakhstan, including 35-year-old Kazakh resident Panar who lives in Almaty, the Central Asian country's largest city. "I'm now obsessed with TCM culture... I used to be skeptical about what the herbal leaves could do at first, but my attitude drastically shifted in 2014 because at that time, TCM therapy effectively controlled my mom's hyperglycemia," Panar told the Global Times over the weekend, noting that she has since then started to learn the medical theory of TCM.In tandem with Panar's attitude changes are the growing interests of Kazakh people in TCM therapy.

Zhu Cuimei, a Chinese national who operates a TCM clinic in Almaty, told the Global Times over the weekend that in recent years, foot massages have been increasingly welcomed in Kazakhstan, despite a relatively high price of 100 yuan ($14.59) per massage. "Several years ago, there were merely two or three TCM clinics in Kazakhstan, but now there are plenty of them," Panar said. Rising interestsThe booming Kazakh TCM healthcare sector is partly due to closer industry cooperation between China and Kazakhstan under the Belt and Road (B&R) initiative, Abai Baygizhin, chairman of the board of the Kazakh National Scientific Medical Center, told the Global Times. In January 2017, Chinese authorities rolled out a road map to boost TCM in countries and regions along the B&R routes. Under the plan, China will set up 50 TCM communication and exchange centers in B&R countries and regions, and will promote 20 TCM international practice standards until 2020. So far, TCM has spread to 180 countries and regions across the world, and 103 member states of the World Health Organization have already granted approval for the practices of Chinese acupuncture and moxibustion. Meanwhile, 18 members have included them in their medical insurance provisions, according to media reports. In addition to government support, TCM usage is gaining widespread recognition among other Central Asian countries, Baygizhin explained. And even Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev has become a firm supporter of TMC. The entrance of TCM into the Kazakh market has filled a vacancy for medicine in a country where residents' perceptions of health have been changing from being "treatment-focused" to "prevention-driven," Baygizhin said. And TCM's philosophy, with its unique advantages in preventing diseases, is in line with Kazakh people's health pursuits. Rapid expansionAt the same time, the Central Asian country is also eager to attract foreign investment into the local TCM industry. Kamalzhan Nadyrov, head of the Astana health department, told the Global Times that the Kazakh government is now actively improving laws and regulations in the healthcare industry and studying potential tax-cut policies to further promote the country's cooperation with foreign TCM-related companies, including those from China. And Kazakhstan's friendly business environment could be an edge, Nadyrov said. "We also hope that the development of the TCM industry could drive Kazakhstan's medical tourism, attracting more tourists from neighboring countries to visit," Svetlana Saukenova, head of Kazakhstan-based Arman Family and Medical Law Firm, told the Global Times. Meanwhile, Kazakhstan - the place where Chinese leaders first put forward the B&R initiative and the leading economy in Central Asia - is also raising the eyebrows of many Chinese investors for its huge market potential in TCM treatment, Yu Jianglin, global executive president of herbal health products developer Infinitus (China) Company, told the Global Times over the weekend. Beijing Tong Ren Tang European Holding Co, and several other investment firms, have signed a strategic cooperation agreement with the Medical Center Hospital of the President's Affairs Administration of the Republic of Kazakhstan on setting up the Tong Ren Tang TCM Healthcare Center in the capital city of Astana.Among with Tong Ren Tang, Infinitus' application to set up a subsidiary in Kazakhstan was also approved by local authorities on September 4. Yu said that the move marks an important step for the group's expansion in Central Asia, and through the institution, the company could better understand local market demand while driving local employment and healthcare industry growth."For the next step, Infinitus is planning to cooperate with local medical institutions and universities to further facilitate the application of TCM in the national medical system and to complement the country's healthcare industry," Yu noted.However, hurdles still remain in terms of figuring out how TCM theories could be widely accepted among Western medical practitioners, considering that the theoretical system of TCM is "totally different" from Western medicine, noted Wu Zhendou, deputy director of the International Cooperation Department of the State Administration of TCM.Furthermore, "there are legal barriers in terms of TCM qualifications and drug access, and the shortage of foreign TCM talent is also an urgent problem," Wu said.

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Global Times (China)

October 12, 2018 Friday

**Overseas KOLs help promote TCM tourism**

**BYLINE:** David Lee

**LENGTH:** 616 words

Illustration: Peter C. Espina/GT

China has been cultivating Key Opinion Leaders (KOL) to promote **traditional** **Chinese** **medicine** (TCM) tourism, and the experiment is paying off well. In mid-September, a group of overseas KOLs gathered in Beijing as guests of the Beijing Municipal Commission of Tourism Development to experience **traditional** **Chinese** **medicine,** in its wide variety of forms such as **acupuncture**, ear candling, **cupping,** tai chi, herbal pill preparation, and medicinal sachet making.The group, coming from Russia, Spain, Mexico, and Malaysia, had the opportunity to engage with local TCM practitioners to better understand how treatment and services can be rendered. TCM tourism has been promoted to - and well received by - China's aging urban population keen on a healthy retirement lifestyle.The appeal to affluent middle-class seniors is natural, as it is they who most desire to return to their essential roots and detach from the modern hustling. But the idea of promoting TCM to foreigners is relatively new, which is why China is leveraging the experiment on overseas KOLs.In March, China announced the country's first batch of TCM tourism industry bases.

As a joint effort by the China National Tourism Administration and the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine, 73 TCM tourist destinations were announced and expected to attract droves of visitors from home and abroad.The integration of TCM with tourism offers an opportunity where overseas KOLs can discover cool destinations and fun experiences. There are, however, caveats when attracting potential foreign tourists. The sometimes enigmatic potency of TCM, in its many exotic forms, comes with both charm and pitfalls.When it comes to TCM, there has been a lot of hype about its miraculous curing powers, to the extent of being supernatural; there are many myths and misunderstandings that undermine TCM's credibility. Basically, the philosophical foundation of TCM, expressed in terms like "yin-yang" and "wuxing (the five phases)," is totally different from modern Western medical science.Though there is a huge scientific debate about TCM's philosophical roots, the many forms of traditional Chinese medicine such as acupuncture and herbal nutrients have long been proven effective through solid empirical evidence. Indeed, just like yoga from India, TCM is appealing to global audiences keen on exploring different and innovative ways to improve their health and wellness. Therefore, the strategy to convince KOLs first is clever one, in that the message about TCM, its potency, effects and related touristic activities will be delivered by communications experts with subtlety and nuances to ensure both scientific rigorousness and an effective pitch. TCM tourists destinations across China must also be staffed by personnel who have the necessary knowledge and sensitivity to provide international customers with quality service based on sound science. There are many ways TCM can help, nurture, cure, and care the sick and the infirm, and there are TCM businesses and practitioners who look to offer sales and service beyond China. There is every reason for TCM-themed tourism to be both fun and conducive to a healthy body and mind. Overseas KOLs can help convey the right message and let international customers looking for new and innovative medicine to benefit from their trip to China.This article was published on the Global Times Metropolitan section Two Cents page, a space for reader submissions, including opinion, humor and satire. The ideas expressed are those of the author alone, and do not represent the position of the Global Times.

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Global Times (China)

May 30, 2018 Wednesday

**TCM professor at Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine gaining popularity among foreign students**

**BYLINE:** Du Qiongfang

**LENGTH:** 1977 words

Tuina has dedicated himself for the past three decades to promoting the 2000-year-old tuina (a form of TCM manipulative therapy) worldwide with his English lectures and therapy demonstrations.Last week, **acupuncture** anesthesia was successfully applied to three surgeries of coronary angiography at the Yueyang Hospital of Integrated Traditional Chinese and Western Medicine affiliated to SHUTCM, a precedent of the application of **acupuncture** anesthesia in this kind of surgery. "TCM's tuina [traditional Chinese massage] can also take the place of opioid analgesics to produce analgesic effects. It is more effective, more comfortable and more convenient than **acupuncture**, which requires needles. And it is safer than Western chemical medicine, which may have side-effects," Li said. Based on TCM's medical principles which have a history of two millennia, tuina involves using the hand, palm, knuckles and fingers to apply pressure in meridian and acupressure points to remove blockages along meridian points and stimulate specific areas with qi (body's energy flow) to promote healing.It is often used in conjunction with **acupuncture**, fire **cupping,** herbalism and qigong (Chinese breathing exercise). The therapy can be traced back to China's primitive period, when people used the techniques to treat accidental injuries caused by natural disasters or animal attacks.

As a form of TCM, the knowledge of tuina is extensive and profound. However, with Li's precise and proficient English explanations and demonstrations, even foreign students can easily understand difficult TCM concepts. Last Thursday, around 20 students from the US attended Li's lecture as a part of their study-abroad trip program. Li introduced several basic skills of the manipulative therapy at the lecture. The students listened to Li with great interest and attentiveness.Every time Li introduced a new skill, he invited a student to come forward to be his model. Although tuina is a practical discipline which requires much practice, it also requires accurate descriptions of the key points of the skill.Hands-on learningKristine Troutman is a nurse practitioner student from Florida, the US. She joined the study-abroad trip organized by the University of South Alabama to learn about Chinese culture and basic TCM knowledge. She wants to integrate traditional Chinese medicine into her practice. "This was really my first exposure to TCM, so I'm really interested in finding out the basic principles. I found it very fascinating," Troutman said. "I found it very difficult to do the manipulative therapy. But I can definitely see their worth in practice and how they can help." Rex Berry from the US state of Kentucky is a medical science student from Duquesne University. He thought it would be a good idea to gain knowledge of different kinds of medicine from around the world. "Seeing different types of practices elsewhere can probably help me in my own practice," Berry said. Berry had seen tuina therapies in videos but had never learned them in a classroom. "The concepts are easy to understand, though it's hard to put them into practice, which takes years. But Li did a good way of simplifying them for us," Berry said.Morgan Wimberry from the University of South Alabama also had her first practice of TCM at Li's lecture. She is a healthcare administration major who joined the program to experience different cultures and see how Eastern medicine is practiced compared with Western medicine. "I really like Professor Li's class. He's good at explaining things. He has some hands-on portions for us where we got to try different things," Wimberry said. TCM in EnglishAfter SHUTCM set up an English language acupuncture-moxibustion and tuina major in 2003 to promote TCM overseas, Li, a doctor from Yueyang Hospital of Integrated Traditional Chinese and Western Medicine affiliated to SHUTCM, was invited to the university to give English lectures.His foreign students include those from short-term study-abroad TCM programs and also long-term foreign students who are furthering their studies at SHUTCM.Zhanar, 26, from Kazakhstan has been studying acupuncture and tuina at SHUTCM for the past five years. She prefers TCM to Western medicine because she thinks TCM uses more natural substances such as herbs. She thinks the biggest difficulty foreign students face when studying TCM is the language. But since Li's lecture is in English, she doesn't find it difficult to understand the concepts. "To study medicine, you must clearly understand it," Zhanar said. Different from many Chinese doctors of Western medication science who studied abroad, Li has given lectures to many foreign students even though he himself never studied abroad.Influenced by his family members - his mother was a medical science professor at the former Shanghai Medical College and his wife is a current English professor from Shanghai Medical College of Fudan University - the TCM doctor obtained his bachelor's, master's and doctorial degrees at SHUTCM and is excellent at both medical science and English language skills. Li's English talent was first revealed as early as 1988, when an American patient who could not speak Chinese was seeking treatment at Yueyang Hospital. No other doctor could speak English at that time except Li. Finally, Li interpreted for the patient and the president of the hospital. Since then, more and more foreign patients and guests come to the hospital for treatment or to study. Over the years, Li has demonstrated, taught and promoted tuina therapy in many overseas countries as a TCM doctor or as a teacher. Li once treated a White House doctor with his palm back rolling manipulation when he visited the US. He also treated a high-level executive of an American medication group with his "one finger" manipulation. Gaining popularity overseasAs deputy director of manipulative therapy specialty commission of the World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies, a non-governmental international academic organization which promotes TCM across the world, Li demonstrates and promotes tuina therapy overseas every two or three years during the World Congress of Chinese Medicine held by the organization.The congress is held in different countries across the world and is attended by people from all over the world who are interested or specialized in TCM. Last year, Li promoted tuina and acupuncture in Dubai, where China's State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine launched its Dubai center of TCM. His treatment was praised by some Dubai officials and their family members. Later this year, he will fly to either Canada or Germany to showcase the effectiveness of the TCM therapy. Veerachai Soottitantawat, 47, is a Chinese-Thai national who is doing his PhD at SHUTCM. He finished his undergraduate program of TCM in Thailand, where he first met Li, who was sent to his university to teach TCM. Inspired by Li, Soottitantawat continued his postgraduate studies at SHUTCM for three years then went back to Thailand to pursue his career.Two years ago, Soottitantawat returned to Shanghai to further his studies at SHUTCM. "Thailand also has its own massage therapy, but its techniques are different from TCM's tuina," Soottitantawat said. Sarah, a German student of Li, who took part in an exchange program in SHUTCM, did a part-time job at her German college mentor's clinic. Once, a patient was not willing to receive surgery for a backache and pains in the lower limb. Since she studied TCM in China, her mentor asked if she could do something for the patient with TCM therapies.Sarah used tuina to relieve the patient's pains. After graduation, her mentor asked her to work at the clinic. "A few years ago, she wrote to me and wanted to learn tuina for the treatment of cervical spondylosis," Li said. "The cost of surgeries is very expensive in overseas countries. If the problem is not serious, tuina can solve the problem without costing much. This is also why tuina is popular."Standardized terminology "Different from Western medicine, which is a chemical, tuina is a physical and natural therapy that is becoming very popular in Western countries," said Li, whose effective treatments and demonstrations overseas helped enhance TCM's popularization in overseas countries. Troutman thinks more Americans are gradually accepting TCM. "So I'm hoping to bring it to the forefront and hope to apply what I learned into my practice," Troutman said. "As China grows stronger, more Chinese culture is being exported. As an indispensable part of Chinese traditional culture, TCM can be used as a starting point to spread Chinese culture," Li said. Li thinks the promotion of TCM through tuina is easier than acupuncture because tuina is more easily accepted for its convenience and comfort. "Many overseas countries and regions demand licenses to practice acupuncture with needles," Li said. "And the comfortable feeling generated by beta-endorphins when receiving tuina treatment also makes the therapy increasingly popular.""Tuina used to be called anmo (Chinese for massage) in ancient China. But that type of massage is different from what is today conducted at roadside massage parlors. Ancient anmo used to be a part of Chinese medical science."Tuina is a manipulative therapy for disease treatment and prevention, or health care under the guidance of TCM principles. So the standard name of the therapy should be tuina. Although roadside massages can also offer relaxation, it has no real medical effect." The popularization of TCM cannot be accomplished without a precise translation. According to Li, there is no standardization commission for the English translation of TCM in China. But over the years, English translations of some TCM terminologies have become fixed, such as yin, yang, qi, qigong and tuina. Li is involved in a project by the World Health Organization to develop a standardized terminology for TCM practices. Li is responsible for the Chinese and English translations of tuina terms."Public English translators or translators who know only about Western medicine cannot translate TCM into English precisely. Since TCM is a part of Chinese traditional culture, TCM practitioners should first bring forward TCM concepts and translate them into English."During the translation process, we can discuss this with foreigners. With the internationalization of China, there are more opportunities for TCM practitioners to communicate with foreigners," Li added.Li often discusses TCM translation with his wife, who graduated from Shanghai International Studies University and is now teaching English at Fudan."It is impossible to find a completely equivalent English translation for every TCM concept. Sometimes we have to differentiate some concepts and persist to the Chinese elements. For example, I insist on using the pinyin word for tuina instead of the word 'massage' when translating the traditional Chinese massage."

Foreign students practice traditional Chinese massage. Photos:Du Qiongfang/GT

Li Zhengyu studies a patient's documents. Photos:Du Qiongfang/GT

In-class TCM demonstration Photos:Du Qiongfang/GT

In-class TCM demonstration Photos:Du Qiongfang/GT

Li Zhengyu delivers a TCM class to foreigners. Photos:Du Qiongfang/GT

Li Zhengyu with his foreign students.Photos:Courtesy of Li Zhengyu

Li Zhengyu with his foreign students.Photos:Courtesy of Li Zhengyu

Li Zhengyu with his foreign students.Photos:Courtesy of Li Zhengyu

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Global Times (China)

September 28, 2016 Wednesday

**Death of Chinese actress sparks Chinese medicine row**

**BYLINE:** Wang Han

**LENGTH:** 756 words

Illustration: Lu Ting/GT

The recent death of 26-year-old Chinese actress Xu Ting has sparked heated online debates over the effectiveness of **traditional Chinese medicine** (TCM). After being diagnosed with lymphoma, a type of cancer that destroys one's immune system, in July, the Lost In Macao star opted for TCM such as **cupping** and **acupuncture** rather than chemotherapy.On July 24, Xu posted on her Weibo photos of her TCM treatment. "Every day the doctor pricks my fingers and my back with needles and squeezes my blood out," she complained. "I also have to drink lots of bitter herbal drugs."Many online users argued that TCM is useless to cure cancer and begged Xu to receive modern Western medical treatment before it was too late, but Xu still insisted on TCM. Her situation worsened until, in mid-August, she finally relented and underwent two weeks of chemotherapy.

But by then her cancer was late-stage and, on September 7, she passed away.Since her high-profile death, online users have been debating whether the TCM methods Xu used aggravated her cancer and whether she might have lived had she opted for Western medicine from the very beginning. One Weibo user commented that no existing TCM methods have been proven effective for curing cancer. "It is insane to use cupping or scraping to treat cancer," the blogger added.But others argued that TCM should not be blamed for Xu's death because, at her late stage, neither Western nor Chinese medicine could have possibly saved her. "Lymphoma is the most incurable type of cancers. Only 59 percent of patients with early-stage lymphoma can extend their life for about five years through chemotherapy," one netizen said. "Chemo would only waste her family lots of money and cause her physical torture."The effectiveness of TCM in treating small sicknesses like colds, flu, stomachaches and cuts is well known and oft-practiced in Chinese households. TCM is also popular among young Chinese adult females to relieve dysmenorrhoea (menstruation cramps). In these instances, most Chinese usually opt for TCM over Western-brand medications or antibiotics.But when it comes to life-threatening illnesses, TCM should never replace Western medical treatment, as there are no medically verified cases of TCM eliminating cancer or AIDS. On the contrary, there are numerous reports of TCM patients dying because they waited too long to properly treat their illnesses.In 2015, a woman from Sichuan Province used TCM to try to cure her early stage breast cancer. According to media reports, she visited many TCM doctors all over the country, adopting various methods like moxibustion (burning dried mugwort on the body) and herbal remedies.Her breast tumor persisted until her TCM doctors threw up their hands and said there was nothing else to do but receive chemo. But by then her cancer cells had already spread to other organs. She died.Why would these patients and their families shun proven Western medical treatment for old-fashioned Chinese methods? One reason is the price issue. Online statistics show that, in China, just one session of chemotherapy costs between 3,000 yuan ($449.73) and 7,000 yuan. Usually dozens of sessions are required.In contrast, cupping and acupuncture are only hundreds of yuan per session. For patients from poor economic backgrounds, receiving Western medical treatment could put them in debt for life.Additionally, cancer patients are petrified of the pain and side effects (like vomiting) of chemo. Actress Xu said that she had a friend who died after experiencing the unbearable agony of radiology."I am not sure whether TCM can cure my cancer but chemotherapy treatment is extremely painful and could even make me die faster," she wrote in a blog post while still alive.Some online skeptics pointed out that Xu's decision was also motivated by vanity. As someone who heavily relied on her looks for her profession and had allegedly undergone facial reconstruction surgery, Xu might have been horrified about losing all her hair in chemo. "I don't want to let chemotherapy torment me to the point where there's no beauty left," she wrote.Sadly, now there's no Xu Ting left either, another strike against TCM and their doctors and another example why Chinese hospitals should make antibiotics and Western medical methods more affordable and more well-known to patients in need.The opinions expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Global Times.

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Global Times (China)

August 17, 2016 Wednesday

**Healing the qi**

**BYLINE:** Chen Fangjun

**LENGTH:** 1521 words

A foreign TCM doctor performs **cupping** therapy on a patient. More and more foreigners are heading to China to learn and practice TCM. Photo: CFP

Lighting cotton balls in glass cups to create a vacuum and then putting them on the back of the prostrate patient one by one, the doctor's hands move quickly and with surety. He is administering **cupping** therapy, which would be an ordinary scene in clinics all around China, except that this particular doctor is a foreigner.**Cupping** therapy is not new to doctor Igor Micunovic. In fact, the 38-year-old Montenegrin, who is currently doing a clinical internship at the First Teaching Hospital of Tianjin University of **Traditional** **Chinese** **Medicine** routinely administers **cupping** therapy to patients. In his independent clinical practice, he has seen various responses to **cupping** therapy, especially from Western patients."Oh, how long are the bruises going to last? I don't dare go sunbathing; people would think I am a victim of domestic violence," said one patient, who was accompanied by her husband.

"Well, just one to two years. Later the skin will peel off and revitalize itself over time," said Micunovic jokingly to the visibly shocked couple. "I'm just joking; they might last several days or up to a week," he said, finally putting them at ease.As the West wakes up to cupping therapy, bruising remains a major concern: spouses and parents of patients fear being accused of abuse.A particularly serious incident happened in his hometown of Montenegro. The mother of his 6-year-old patient was accused of child abuse when she took her daughter to get vaccinated, and someone noticed her bruises. A hospital official had to call Micunovic to prove the mother's innocence. Cupping therapy bruises propelled the traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) therapy technique onto the world stage recently when highly decorated American Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps sported them shortly after winning gold at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games in Brazil. Western media and social networks went wild with curiosity."What Are the Purple Dots on Michael Phelps? Cupping Has an Olympic Moment," said the headline of a New York Time blog on August 8. The post was accompanied by a 41 second video clip explaining why Olympians are turning to cupping therapy.Phelps posted photos of himself during cupping therapy online. In an August 13 interview with CCTV, Phelps disclosed that he has been doing cupping for two or three years, and it is effective for him.Coming to China in 2001, Micunovic is one of the growing number of foreigners who are learning and practicing TCM, eager to promote it to the world. This group of foreigners are delighted that more people around the world are becoming familiar with TCM through the athletes at the Rio Olympics and are hopeful that there will be fewer misunderstandings about the medical practice. For love of TCMIt was the efficacy of cupping in sports medicine that first attracted Micunovic. According to him, cupping promotes faster rehabilitation and gets rid of pain after a competition by improving the flow of qi (vital internal energy).Micunovic came across TCM while reading for his master's degree in medicine at the University of Kragujevac in Serbia in 2000. Minoring in sports medicine at the time, Micunovic was instantly intrigued by TCM's rehabilitative properties when he came across it in a book. "I was greatly inspired. I was an athlete myself, and I hoped to find more medical tools for faster rehabilitation and better sports performance," said Micunovic. He was so taken by the subject that he left the University of Kragujevac and enrolled in Tianjin University of TCM. Micunovic's passion for TCM grew even further when he injured his foot during his first year in China. He tried several modern Western treatments, but they didn't work, and his X-rays revealed nothing even though he was still suffering. Then he tried acupuncture, and after his first attempt, his pain was gone. The doctor who performed acupuncture on him later became his tutor and mentor.Through his study of TCM and his own experience, Micunovic has achieved a deep understanding of TCM and its difference from Western medicine."Chinese medicine treats the human body as a unit and search for the disease's root and manifestations, but modern [Western] medicine treats only symptoms," he said. "A TCM doctor's diagnosis might predict and treat diseases at the very beginning, while modern [Western] medicine often finds sickness in a late phase." Not everyone has a chance to gain an in-depth understanding of TCM like Micunovic. Even though TCM is gaining popularity overseas, it is not yet mainstream and people have varying understandings of what it is and how it works. Some are extremely skeptical, and they regard TCM as unscientific, a kind of folk medicine or even witchcraft.But even as some Westerners denigrate TCM, other more pragmatic foreigners flock to it. People might be surprised by the overnight sensation of cupping therapy due to the Rio Olympics. But the fact that more and more foreign doctors have been heading to China to learn and practice TCM is a more powerful evidence of the influence and popularity of TCM, said Micunovic.

Igor Micunovic performs acupuncture on a patient at his clinic in Montenegro. Photo: Courtesy of Igor Micunovic

Foreign TCM doctors in ChinaA foreigner who practices TCM is still quite novel in China. Kwak Hyeong-seok is a 36-year-old Korean doctor who works at the Beijing Dongwen TCM Clinic. Kwak moved to China in 2004 to study at the Beijing University of Chinese Medicine.According to Kwak, people may think that it is more common for a Korean to learn TCM in China than a Westerner who is less familiar with TCM. But they are wrong."The truth is that it takes maybe more courage for people like me because the TCM license is not recognized in Korea, which means that [from the start] I decided never go back," he said.Kwak was attracted by TCM's efficiency in curing chronic diseases compared with Western medicine. He developed a strong faith in TCM after his brother's chronic rhinitis was cured using TCM.His work in China is not without its challenges though. Even as an Asian, he too has to overcome certain traditional perceptions about doctors."I don't really have advantages when it comes to Chinese patients, because many Chinese prefer a local one," he said.While not much of a favorite among the Chinese, doctors like Kwak are comparatively more popular among foreigners, especially those who share the same or a similar culture and language.As a Korean doctor, Kwak is more attractive to patients from Korea and Japan. Kwak thinks his advantage over local TCM doctors lies in his being a foreigner who understands the different cultural backgrounds and has resonance with foreigners. This is important because people may think that TCM is the same throughout East Asia when the truth is that TCM is localized according to the different natural environments and physiques. "Chinese patients prefer a strong sensation during acupuncture, while Japanese and Koreans are more sensitive and prefer more tender treatment because in Korea and Japan, the needles they use are thinner," he said. His understanding of the difference helps him better treat his patients.Promoting TCM overseasForeign doctors who study TCM have multiple career options. Some, like Kwak, might opt to build their career and family in China, whereas others, like Micunovic, may want to return home.According to Micunovic, TCM clinics date back decades in the US. He said former US President Richard Nixon introduced the technique after a visit to China, during which he was amazed by TCM.However, the majority of the clinics in the West are irregular and run by people without proper training or even certification, he said. The stigmatization of TCM as unscientific folk medicine, massage therapy, or even witchcraft abroad has posed problems for the promotion of legitimate TCM practices."It took me nearly three years to notarize my bachelor and PhD diplomas from Tianjin University of TCM in Montenegro," said Micunovic. According to Micunovic, the promotion of TCM can only be gained by removing misconceptions about TCM in the West through education and proper regulations. This is why he is determined to get his TCM license in China and later cooperate with the local health authority back home. Micunovic also thinks doctors should practice what they preach and show the health benefits of a TCM lifestyle by living it. He is not only a TCM doctor but also a practitioner. According to him, the aim of TCM is to keep relative balance - inside and out, meaning within one's body as well as the environment. As an athlete, Micunovic gradually gave up strenuous exercise and learned qigong and tai chi. In accordance with TCM theory, he watches what he eats and tries not to waste energy but to accumulate it. By doing these, he aims to dispel misunderstandings and distrust toward TCM. "In Chinese medicine, the basic principles are not to try to convince others but to show your results and prove to others," he said.

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Global Times (China)

September 6, 2016 Tuesday

**Their cups runneth over**

**BYLINE:** Global Times

**LENGTH:** 470 words

bahuoguan), a **traditional Chinese medicine** (TCM) treatment came under the global spotlight when a bunch of foreign athletes were spotted with dark purple splotches on their shoulders and backs during this year's Rio Olympic Games in Brazil. Some of them had reportedly praised **cupping** as the best therapy they'd ever had.Regular **cupping** therapy involves suction created by using heat or mechanical pumps to make the glass cups stick to the skin.Usually, a TCM doctor would perform the therapy on a patient by lighting cotton balls in glass cups to create a vacuum and then putting the cups on the patient's shoulders and back one by one. A treatment usually lasts between 10 and 20 minutes.Although this treatment is now gaining popularity all over the world it has been a long-favored treatment in Shanghai with hundreds (if not thousands) of people lining up at local hospitals and clinics for **cupping**.The 26-year-old Yuan Jie is one of these **cupping** enthusiasts.

"My whole body feels relaxed after the treatment,"Yuan told the Global Times. He has been using the therapy for quite a long time.Another local resident surnamed Zhao said he had found cupping was a good way to treat eczema."Everyone has eczema inside their body. So getting it out of your body is beneficial to your health,"Zhao explained.Cupping therapy can also help ease body pain.Mr Wang who is a sedentary worker, used to suffer from neck and low back pain. He finally found pain relief in cupping after a friend had recommended this for him."I tried it a couple of times and my neck pain and back pain gradually lessened,"Wang said."That's how I fell in love with cupping therapy."Not only have local residents appreciated this long-standing TCM treatment, but many expats inShanghaihave also tried the method over the past few years.Wu Yaochi is a doctor with the TCM department of Shanghai's Sixth People's Hospital. He told the Global Times there were a growing number of the city's younger people using cupping therapy these days."As today's young people tend to adopt a less active lifestyle than the older generation, more and more young people are developing illnesses such aslumbar intervertebral disc protrusionand shoulder periarthritis. But cupping therapy can help ease the pain and treat these problems,"Wu said.

A man has cupping therapy at Shanghai's Sixth People's Hospital.

Doctors with Shanghai's Sixth People's Hospital administer cupping therapy to patients. Usually, a TCM doctor would perform the therapy on a patient by lighting cotton balls in glass cups to create a vacuum and then putting the cups on the patient's shoulders and back one by one. Cupping therapy has been a long-favored treatment in Shanghai with hundreds (if not thousands) of people lining up at local hospitals and clinics for cupping. Photos: Yang Hui/GT

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Global Times (China)

March 5, 2014 Wednesday

**Word Matters**

**BYLINE:** Global Times

**LENGTH:** 132 words

Illustration: Lu Ting/GT

"It is merely commercial hype to say that moxibustion can cure all kinds of illness or that **acupuncture** can promote weight loss."A young Shanghai mother surnamed Chen is a firm believer and a keen practitioner of moxibustion and **acupuncture.** She not only practices these **Traditional Chinese Medicine** techniques on her parents, but also on her 4-year-old daughter. When the little girl caught a bad cold recently, Chen insisted that her daughter be treated with traditional **acupuncture** rather than modern medication. After performing **acupuncture** on her daughter for several days without success, Chen finally took her sick girl to hospital, where she was diagnosed with pneumonia. Doctors warned that the efficacy of moxibustion and **acupuncture** has been widely exaggerated.

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Global Times (China)

October 10, 2017 Tuesday

**Science versus tradition**

**BYLINE:** China Newsweek - Global Times

**LENGTH:** 1612 words

[#x25cb] Chinese science teachers hesitant about their new role as TCM instructors [#x25cb] There is a skepticism among modern parents toward the new course[#x25cb] Supporters say TCM culture ought to be promoted among the next generation

Primary school students learn the craft of **cupping** at a **traditional** **Chinese** **medicine** hospital in Tancheng county, Shandong Province. Photo: VCG

The fall semester is somewhat different this year for Yang Jun, a science teacher in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province.On August 9, shortly before the start of the new semester, his school, the Xiaoshang Yipeng Third Elementary School, received a notice from the provincial department of education and the provincial administration of traditional Chinese medicine, informing them of a new mandatory training for a new course in the elementary curriculum."Traditional Chinese Medicine and Wellness (TCMW)," as it is called, suggesting that this new course be offered in grade 5, one class hour per week, to be taught by science teachers.As a science teacher, Yang feels uncomfortable taking on such a task. He believes that science teachers are not a good fit for teaching TCM. Yang also pointed out that, though having a lot in common with science, TCM and science are simply not the same.In fact, many TCM beliefs directly contradict proven scientific theories. "For instance," Yang observed, "some TCM experts claim that humans may invigorate their organs by ingesting respective animals organs. 'A kidney for a kidney,' for example, which means eating an animal kidney nourishes one's own. How ridiculous does that sound to the science teachers!" Yang is not alone in feeling unsure about his newly assigned role as a TCM teacher. Shi Youhe, Director of Teaching and Researching at Lin'an Chenxi Elementary School, shares Yang's concern. On August 24, a week before the new semester began, Shi attended training."I should at least have some basic TCM knowledge myself before I can motivate my students to learn. However, till this point, I have not even had complete faith in TCM myself. I believe that the first step is to make myself interested in this subject, but unfortunately, the training only lasted one day."Shi expressed his disappointment but said he would nonetheless faithfully perform the tasks.

Read, think, learn, practiceShi shared an example of his frustration. There are nine chapters in the textbook TCMW, which is the equivalent of 36 class hours. Each class hour consists of four modules: "Read," "Think," "Learn" and "Practice."Every lesson begins with a well-known story from ancient China, followed by a learning point and then an extended practice session. For example, Lesson 1, "Shennong (an ancient Chinese chief known as Yandi) Discovering Curative Virtues of Plants," showcases the process of Chinese ancestors discovering herbal medicine.The story is followed by the introduction of the homologous nature of medicine and food. In the practice module, students are asked to "taste the following foods that have curative properties," and "decide whether they taste the same as described in the traditional Chinese medical literature."Shi was at a loss upon reading this question. Admittedly, introducing TCM theories with stories should be appealing to children. However, without any reference books for the teachers to prepare for the class, their job is made difficult. "Does that mean I will have to buy some Chinese medicine to try for myself?" Shi wondered.He also feels that the development stage of this course was too rushed. "The textbook is written in a hasty manner. I think they need to realize that a lot of TCM theories that the experts take for granted are difficult for us laymen." said Shi.Yang shares his view. He pointed out that the TCM course did not go through an experimental stage like science classes during the curriculum reform. "Having written the textbook doesn't mean the course is ready to be taught in the classroom. There should be an experimental stage before it is offered to the public. They should have picked at least one school for a test run."The "curriculum reform" Yang referred to is the National Science Curriculum Reform for the Compulsory Elementary Education, which is currently occurring simultaneously with the promotion of the TCM course. The new science curriculum criterion will replace the 2001 version.According to Liu Enshan, chair of the Revision Committee of Compulsory Education Elementary Science Curriculum Standards, the development of the new curriculum standards took over five years. The early stage involved status quo research, document analysis, International comparison, monographic study, design demonstration and preliminary exploration of teaching strategies.After the completion of the first draft, several large-scale surveys were carried out targeting eastern and western regions of China, which were then followed by repeated revisions of the draft.The TCM course does not appear to have any official standard. An official course standard specifies the nature and concept of a discipline, course objectives, course content, as well as implementation recommendations etc. As far as Yang is concerned, before a course is offered to the public there must be a standard, however TCM textbooks seem to be the only thing it offers. Popular skepticismGao Yinming is a mother of a fifth grader. She keeps an open mind and is hopeful that her daughter will learn something new. But Gao knows a parent who is a doctor trained in Western medicine. He is one of those who are against introducing TCM in the classroom.It is of vital importance to cultivate scientific literacy in our children, but traditional Chinese medicine, Tibetan medicine or Miao (one of the ethnic minorities in China) medicine hardly do anything to contribute to it, the doctor said.In fact, for a long time, TCM's scientific quality and value system have been subject to controversy. One parent from Shaoxing is openly opposing teaching children TCM at school. He is concerned that this course may cause a discrepancy between what is taught in class and what is learned at home.This concern is shared by many other parents as well as science teachers, such as Yang, who wonders what to do when a TCM course contradicts science.Parents like Gao who are more supportive on this matter also have their concerns. TCM teachers, they say, have only attended temporary training. Being amateurs themselves, are they really suitable to teach?Moreover, TMC as an area of study is extensive and profound. Though the TCM course aims only to touch upon the basics, it can be misleading to children, as their comprehensive and interpretive abilities are not fully developed yet.Thirdly, some TCM theories tend to be ambiguous or vague. While adults may form a correct understanding, children tend to take things literally. As someone suggested online, "why not offer children a first-aid course or sex education instead of TCMW?"Fang Jianqiao, President of Zhejiang Chinese Medical University (ZCMU), believes that elementary school students are not old enough yet to take any of these courses, including and especially sex education. Fang explained that because children are naturally inquisitive, with easy access to information nowadays, introducing these concepts too early might encourage them to try it themselves..The goalOn April 8, Zhejiang Province released the first series of elementary school TCM textbooks in the country. Xu Weiwei, director of Zhejiang administration of TCM, has been envisioning this day for over two years.He believes that to popularize TCM, it is important to promote wider acceptance of TCM among the next generation. To accept something, Xu explains, the first step is to get to know it.In 2016, Xu officially submitted a project proposal to the provincial department of education, along with a funding request to the department of finance. His proposal was met with enthusiasm.Zhejiang department of finance sponsors this project with an annual fund of 5-6 million yuan.Xu ascribed the successful approval of the project to the rich TCM culture in Zhejiang. The province had 94 State-owned TCM hospitals as of 2015, generating an annual number of TCM hospital visits that ranks first in the country.In January 2016, the idea of introducing TCM to children at school was brought up and discussed at the National People's Congress.On February 26, the State Council released a national "Strategic Plan for the Development of Traditional Chinese Medicine (2016-2030). In October 2015, Tu Youyou, Chinese pharmaceutical chemist and educator, received the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for discovering artemisinin in qinghao (wormwood herb), proving the efficacy of TCM and boosting national enthusiasm to it. Xu believes that all those above have contributed to the birth of this project.This project does not lack in supporters. Zhao Min, professor of Hubei University of Chinese Medicine, believes that TCM is an important part of Chinese culture, "teaching our youth TCM helps to boost their national confidence and cultural pride."In response to parents' concerns on the obscurity of TCM and the feasibility of the project, Xu explained, "this course does not aim to teach methods of treatment, but rather a way of life. It aims to promote TCM philosophy, to show our children that man is an integral part of nature."To address some of the teachers' concerns about their competence to teach this course, Xu said local TCM practitioners will be sent for the training of teachers.China Newsweek - Global Times

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Global Times (China)

July 22, 2015 Wednesday

**Word matters**

**BYLINE:** Global Times

**LENGTH:** 163 words

Illustration: Luo Xuan/GT

"Isn't that the needle that was used during my **acupuncture** treatment in hospital yesterday?"A man surnamed Huang in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, said this in shock after he accidentally pulled out a 10-centimeter-long needle from his head. He spent about 800 yuan ($128.88) at a local **traditional Chinese medicine** (TCM) hospital for **acupuncture** treatment on July 16. He found the needle in his scalp while washing his hair the next day. The hospital management confirmed that the doctor used three needles on Huang's head but said all of them were pulled out after the treatment. But the hospital also admitted that the needle found by Huang is from their hospital. The hospital management has apologized to him and refunded his treatment cost as well as offering him additional compensation. They said the needle would not harm Huang's health, which was also confirmed by an expert from another local TCM hospital. (Source: The Qianjiang Evening News)

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Global Times (China)

December 27, 2018 Thursday

**Local traditional medicine team serving in Morocco**

**BYLINE:** Global Times

**LENGTH:** 81 words

Focusing on **traditional Chinese medicine,** they are a medical unit from Shanghai sent to Morocco to provide medical treatment support. From 2016 to 2018, the team completed outpatient assistance over 22,500 times in Morocco. It also launched a program to carry out massage treatment for Moroccan residents.Shanghai dispatched its first **acupuncture** team to Morocco in 1986, where it set up a medical unit. The unit has grown into a famous **acupuncture** and massage treatment agency in Morocco.

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Global Times (China)

April 3, 2019 Wednesday

**TCM doctor relieves passenger's pain during flight**

**BYLINE:** Global Times

**LENGTH:** 235 words

A Chinese doctor weighs Chinese traditional medicine. Photo: IC

A Chinese acupuncturist is being credited with relieving the excruciating pain of a fellow passenger on board a flight from Pakistan to Beijing, earning the former many thumbs-up from netizens.A compilation of photos and an audio interview with the doctor appeared online as a video by The Paper on Sunday. It shows the man lying in the aisle writhing in pain.A steward immediately asked passengers if there was a doctor on board who could help the man and Yang Sijin, director of the **Traditional** **Chinese** **Medicine** Hospital affiliated with Southwest Medical University in Southwest China's Sichuan Province, came forward.The video shows Yang helped relieve the man's anguish so he was able to complete the flight to Beijing.While none of the photos in the compilation video show Yang actually using **acupuncture** needles on the man, one photo seems to suggest the doctor may have applied one through the man's shirt on his upper chest."Treating patients is the obligatory responsibility of our doctors," said Yang, adding that he felt relieved the man was able to recover.The incident attracted a lot of attention on social media, with many people praising the doctor and **Traditional** **Chinese** **Medicine.**The video didn't mention the Pakistani man's condition or what may have caused his pain.The Paper

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Global Times (China)

December 12, 2016 Monday

**Expats suffering from Shanghai stress should give TCM a try**

**BYLINE:** John Harold Armstrong

**LENGTH:** 707 words

Illustration: Chen Xia/GT

If there is one undervalued element of China's encouragement of soft power and cultural exports, it's **traditional** **Chinese** **medicine** (TCM) and its various therapeutic offshoots.Living in a big-city environment such as Shanghai, we are all subject to additional toxins, pollutants and particulate matter as well as stress brought on by our busy lifestyles and work schedules. But what to do about it?TCM is currently enjoying its moment on the world stage following headlines coming out of the 2016 Rio Olympic Games about the health practices of certain elite-level athletes. Athletes, the most superstitious of creatures when it comes to health and fitness, are usually early-adopters of any health-related therapies that could give them a slight edge over their equally health-conscious opponents.When Michael Phelps whipped off his tracksuit to reveal his **cupping** bruises, it caused a sensation across the world.

Adopting holistic therapies, acupuncture and other TCM are not exactly new to high-level sports.However, cupping is a mystery to anyone not of Chinese heritage and thus resulted in a million dollars worth of free press not just for Phelps but the TCM industry. Immediately the Internet was abuzz with gossip and speculation regarding this little-known, hazily understood practice.The resulting publicity is a golden opportunity for TCM to make headway as a recognized beneficial medical treatment that can have very positive and life-improving benefits for a worldwide population.But in fact, TCM has long been embraced by the medical community outside China. Most progressive practitioners of Western medicine view TCM as a valuable complement to other treatments and as a preventative weapon in their arsenal of remedies against disease and internal ailments.The history of trial and error that has been the growth tree of TCM differs somewhat from the scientific method used for Western patent medicinal studies, but the end result is a valuable log of information and cures analogous to traditional Western remedies that were discovered in much the same way.For expats in China, language and a fear of the unknown are significant barriers to experimentation with TCM. Even many of my younger Chinese colleagues view TCM as a quaint or outdated folk practice that they are reluctant to pursue and bemusedly listen to the results of my TCM trials with ground-ant teas or sea polyp skeleton powders.My very first visit to a TCM doctor was with a tremendously busy doctor, a legendary practitioner in Shanghai, who has patients travel to see him from all over China and overseas.Nonetheless, he interviewed me thoroughly, asking questions far in excess of what most time-pressed doctors in my home country would have time for. Finally, after consulting his charts and tables he wrote out a prescription with detailed instructions."Don't worry!" he assured me. "After a couple of weeks sticking to the schedule, if you follow the directions you will regain almost all of your previous energy and vitality. After all," he intoned, "there isn't really much seriously wrong with you other than that you are getting old."A few hours later, a ringing of my doorbell announced the arrival of a courier bringing me my freshly brewed batch of medicine.A large 5-kg plastic sack containing 60 smaller bags of a thick brown, unctuous liquid, each marked with the red seal of a prancing deer on the flap and steaming with a high heat, having just been poured from the medicine brew-pot.Needless to say, each dose tasted terrible and was taken with a certain amount of complaining and grumbling.The thing is - it works! Unlike Western medicine that cannot be taken until a disease presents itself, TCM protocol is to anticipate ailments and correct problems that can lead to adverse health outcomes without using invasive techniques.It's not always able to prescribe a magic bullet, but there is a complementary and beneficial aspect to the treatment that we can all use while trying to stay healthy in this stressful and polluted environment.The opinions expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Global Times.

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Global Times (China)

May 4, 2016 Wednesday

**TCM on top**

**BYLINE:** Global Times - Agencies

**LENGTH:** 1483 words

The health authorities of China's northwestern province of Gansu have been enthusiastically promoting **traditional** **Chinese medicine** (TCM) in their healthcare reform, and have included TCM in the region's medical insurance system. However, their plan is being criticized by those who say China shouldn't forcefully push for the development of TCM until it's been tested by modern science.

A TCM practitioner prepares to perform **acupuncture** on a patient. Photo: IC

After rushing to a hospital to visit 22 children who had just been in a terrible car accident, Liu Weizhong immediately suggested the nurse give the children pig's feet soup to drink, especially the one who was still in coma. The nurse, who did not recognize Liu, director of the Gansu provincial Department of Health, said that the child is in gastric dilatation and should fast for four to five days. The director of the hospital told her to do what Liu said.Later the child in the coma woke up and began to eat. Pig feet's soup then became a famous dish in Gansu, as people decided that the soup was the deciding factor in the children's recovery. Liu was ironically referred to by netizens as the "pig feet director."Recalling the 2011 incident, Liu, 58, told the Southern Weekly that he was taking a big risk. "What if the child died?" he said.During his eight years with the Department of Health, he has always been in the center of controversies as he fervently promotes TCM not only in the province but also on his social media accounts, angering many medical professionals who doubt the efficacy of TCM.While he is under fire, on April 11, Liu attended the monthly news conference of National Health and Family Planning Commission (NHFPC), where he touted Gansu's healthcare reform. As the NHFPC rarely allows a province to boast of its achievements at this kind of conference, some analysts speculated that the commission was implicitly endorsing Gansu's pro-TCM measures.However, it's still being debated whether TCM should be pushed by the government, because there are still some controversies about whether it's a legitimate form of therapy.

A staff member dispenses TCM herbal drinks to elderly people in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province. Photo: IC

Radical reformWhen Liu started work at the Gansu provincial Department of Health in 2008, he worried so much about Gansu's medical reform when he looked at its barren mountains. "Gansu is a poor province. So we have to use cheap methods," he said. According to local statistics from 2007, in that year 70 percent of Gansu patients who needed hospitalization did not get any hospital treatment due to a shortage of funding."We don't have money, technology and there are too many patients. How can we reform our system?" said Liu.After careful consideration, he decided to promote TCM. The reasons are simple according to him: the medicines are cheap, people accept TCM, and he believes TCM can both treat and prevent diseases.Pioneering reform to push TCM officially kicked off in Gansu in 2009. The province announced that locals would receive free TCM diagnoses and treatment and released dozens of policies to develop TCM.The Gansu health department employed a propagandist for each village. These young people not only explained the policy to the locals but also painted walls with TCM factoids. So far, they have painted 71,322 walls. The health department also gave 4.8 million urban and suburban households TCM packages containing thermometers, scraping plates, cupping devices and other items. Liu required the province's comprehensive first-class hospitals which at the time mostly offered Western medicine to establish TCM departments as well as TCM pharmacies. He ordered that at least 5 percent of their beds be made available for TCM patients.At the beginning, Liu's policy was strongly opposed by the Gansu Provincial Cancer Hospital (GPCH). The doctors said that cancer patients need to go through surgery and radiotherapy. To them, TCM is just an accessory to proven Western treatments.Liu later changed the head of the GPCH, and many doctors in the hospital left. "More than 20 experts quit," he said.In the interview with Southern Weekly, Liu said that now the GPCH has become a role model in promoting TCM. In the cancer hospital, TCM prescriptions are everywhere. In the wards, massage, acupuncture and foot baths are given to cancer patients.Liu decided that grass-roots doctors need no medical education background to practice TCM. Now there are 27,235 TCM practitioners in Gansu.

Making achievementNow the average per capita medical costs in Gansu are the lowest in China. Liu boasted that at a time when medical costs in the country are going up, Gansu's are decreasing.After the reform, the average cost of hospital treatment in the GPCH decreased by 4,000 yuan ($618).In terms of curbing the overuse of antibiotics - which can lead to the evolution of antibiotic-resistant viruses and are expensive - He Jing, an obstetrician who has been working in Gansu for 30 years, said that Gansu has been more effective at this task than other provinces. In Gansu, doctors can only prescribe two shots of antibiotics for a caesarian. For minor operations, the use of antibiotics is forbidden. "In other places, they only use those expensive medicines," said He.Liu said Gansu heavily punishes the overuse of antibiotics. "In five years, we've punished about 5,000 doctors. Some were demoted and it was noted on some of their records that they had performed poorly," he said.To ensure the hospitals get their patients to use TCM, quotas have been set. In the province's comprehensive hospitals, the TCM participation rate for patients should reach 80 percent, 90 percent for those suffering from serious diseases. TCM should make up at least 20 percent of total expenses.A local citizen surnamed Sun told the Global Times that in underdeveloped regions like Gansu, people trust TCM more - especially when it comes to treating the elderly.But she said that the promotion of TCM should not become extreme. "Choosing either TCM or Western medicines should depend on the illness you have," she said. According to the timetable provided by the State Council, the country will establish a "hierarchical" medical system by 2020, in which different problems are treated at different medical institutions to reduce pressure on the countries' higher-level medical institutions. But Liu decided to accomplish it by 2017.In Gansu, only 49 out of 350 diseases covered by medical insurance policies can be treated at the first-class hospitals. Patients who go to the hospitals with other problems must pay for their treatment.After implementing the policy in February, some comprehensive hospitals in Gansu's capital Lanzhou have seen empty beds for the first time. While county-level hospitals are packed.Medical experts in big hospitals need to go to rural hospitals to assist staff there for at least six days every season.However, Li Qingfeng, 30, said that after spending one year in a county-level hospital, he felt such reform was not as effective as hoped. The only memory of his time there is of the long commute back and forth. "It's like I'm taking a break. The rural environment is good," he said.Controversy remainsThe effectiveness of TCM has always been a topic of fierce discussion. Many Western medicine doctors argue that as TCM treatments are not subject to the rigors of peer-reviewed studies, they are not reliable and may even be harmful. Yao Jia, from East China's Jiangsu Province, said she spends much of her time correcting friends and relatives' "false" belief in "traditional prescriptions," such as drinking herbal tea to cure sickness or eating donkey skin to increase their blood level. "Besides, I've read reports about how some herbal medicines can be poisonous and harmful to health," she said. "Unless the medicine goes through scientific tests using modern methods, I'm not going to trust it." The total output value of the TCM industry reached more than 730 billion yuan in 2014, making up one third of the total value of the medical industry, according to a 2016 Xinhua News Agency report. Wang Guoqiang, director of the State Administration of TCM said that in the past five years, 500 TCM hospitals have been opened, and 91.2 percent of community health serve centers now provide TCM services. The country is also about to pass its first TCM law.In recent years, many provinces across China have started to include TCM into their public medical insurance programs, such as reimbursing the costs of acupuncture, and herbal medicine. At the end of last year, a TCM law was drafted and submitted to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress for review. The draft regulates TCM, as well as makes suggestions on how to improve TCM. But many experts questioned it on the base of whether TCM is a legitimate science. Global Times - Agencies

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Global Times (China)

December 4, 2013 Wednesday

**Burned by traditional Chinese medicine**

**BYLINE:** Alok Joshi

**LENGTH:** 511 words

Illustration: Peter C. Espina/GT

Working and living in China has been a great learning experience for me so far. It has given me many memories.I'm one of those incorrigible guys who are always eager to experiment with anything new. This bug made me leave my lucrative job, home and family to come all the way to China.A lady colleague mentioned that she goes to a hospital for **acupuncture**, and that it really helped her.

I never dared to ask her medical problem. When I told her about my mild insomnia, she suggested I try it out.She was kind enough to fix an appointment with the doctor after waiting in a long queue for many hours. It turned out to be a famous Traditional Chinese Medicine hospital. I was amazed to see that the whole place busy and crowded.Since the doctor did not know English, my colleague translated my problem to him. He felt my pulse and advised a few sessions of acupuncture.This treatment was not cheap by any means but I decided to give it a try. It started with a head massage, which is always relaxing. Then I was ushered to another room. The doctor took out more than a dozen needles from his white coat pocket and started piercing them softly at different points on my body. I was asked not to move at all.It slowly made me uncomfortable, and I longed for my doctor to remove the needles.Thankfully my maiden experience with acupuncture ended. That night I slept well. The effect, however, gradually started fading.I went through another three sessions. By this time the drill was quite familiar and I did not need my colleague.For my last session, the doctor wanted to try something new. A young trainee female doctor told me in broken English to remove my shirt. Something like a "hot pot" was placed on my navel. The doctor told me to call her if I felt uncomfortable.I was very happy that I was being treated for problems with my stomach. It is my belief that the stomach is the source of all health problems. Initially I felt nice. But slowly I started feeling the heat. I tolerated it, thinking this was the point.At one point it became almost unbearable. I could not move, otherwise the burning pot would spill all over me. I looked around for the doctor. She had disappeared.Finally she came and removed the pot. The skin of my stomach had burned. There was a big boil in the middle of my stomach. The doctor, instead of being apologetic for neglecting me, started blaming me for not calling her.I had to start a new treatment. The boil had to be surgically removed before it became an ulcer.I have a permanent mark in the middle of my stomach. It is my new identification mark, in case I get lost in a crowded place. It will always remind me of China, the hospital, the doctor and my painful experience with "hot pot."

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Global Times (China)

September 26, 2018 Wednesday

**TCM health preservation culture new choice of tourism in Beijing**

**BYLINE:** Global Times

**LENGTH:** 203 words

A foreign participant experiences the TCM. Photo: Courtesy of the Beijing Municipal Commission of Tourism Development Beijing Municip

Organized by Beijing Municipal Commission of Tourism Development, the Launching of Overseas Influences' Experiences of Beijing TCM (**Traditional Chinese Medicine)** Tour kicked off in Beijing on Monday. A number of Key Opinion Leaders from Russia, Spain, Mexico and Malaysia participated in the tour. During the one-week tour, foreign participants experienced a lot of activities including **acupuncture,** moxibustion, making pills, learning taijiquan and tasting herbal cuisine. Sabina Tipsina from Russia said at a press conference on Tuesday that having lived in China for years, she has developed an interest in Chinese culture as well as TCM. "Now, a lot of friends around me not only want to experience TCM, but also learn TCM," she added.Lin Song, deputy director of marketing of Beijing Municipal Commission of Tourism Development, said that the tour aims at developing TCM health tourism business in Beijing. By integrating TCM health preservation culture into different parts of tourism, Beijing's tourism will be further enriched.

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