FORUM

Prospect on Integrated Traditional Chinese and Western Medicine in 21st Century

Prospect on 21st Century Development of TCM and Pharmacology

Zhou Jinhuang (周金黄)
Chinese Academy of Military Medical Sciences, Beijing (100027)

1. The prospect of integration of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and Western Medicine (WM)

It has entered an era of TCM, WM and TWIM (Traditional and Western Integrated Medicine) co-existence. TCM has the intrinsic traditional culture and philosophic foundation of Chinese nation, it belongs to the cultural system with Chinese characteristics, we should cherish and enhance it, although the dross of them should be discarded; WM has already become the mainstream of Chinese modern medicine, it would stride forward significantly as the renovation of modern science and technology as well as the further development of life science, but it still is confined by the unconquerable limitation of ideologic mechanical materialism. If we integrate the philosophy and world view of TCM with the scientific materialism of WM, and combine the macrocosmic thinking and microcosmic substance, a new ideological medical system would emerge, whose foundation is the currently existed integrated cytomedicine.

TCM and WM each has its own ideologic and philosophic basis. To pursue the "two combine into one" blindly is undesirable to the development of TCM and the people's health care. The practice over scores of years has proved that the TWIM way is correct, which bears the characteristics of Chinese culture and medicine. In the coming scores or even longer years, a new type of medical model would emerge, whose foundation is the currently existed integrated cytomedicine.

In regard to integrated clinical practice, one of the focus is to study the TCM syndrome differentiation and the WM disease differential diagnosis with modern scientific approach, so as to integrate these two to a complex that with both subjective and objective parameter, with both modern physiologic scientific basis and clinical pathophysiologic demonstration. The Syndrome Differentiation of TCM is the nucleus of TCM clinical practice, if new demonstration would be obtained in early 21st century, which would be a tremendous progress.

2. Thinking on the modernization of Chinese drugs

Chinese drugs are the component of TCM system, the property of which based on the TCM theory such as the nature, flavour and function. It is necessary to utilize the knowledge and the methods of modern pharmacology, experimental pharmacology and clinical pharmacology to elucidate its property, to study the effective chemical ingredients, modulating function, its nature and chemical structure. At the same time, using pharmacologic method to analyze and synthetize the effect of active principle to elucidate the mechanism of modulation on various functional activities by Chinese recipes and medicinal herbs. The ingredients of Chinese drugs are quite different from the monomer of WM, which seeks for the specific local effect. Although Chinese drugs also have some local effects, but their therapeutic mechanisms mainly focused on the
modulation of general physiologic or biochemical functional system to the normal range. Those patients with hyperaction can be down-regulated, and up-regulated during hypoactivity, eventually the Qi-blood and Yin-Yang have been maintained in the normal activity range. According to the progress of modern Chinese pharmacology, the general pivot for systemic functional system modulation lies on the neuroendocrine and immunomodulating network (NIM), which causes the function of the whole body to maintain within the normal range, hence the modulation of TCM based on the level of wholistic functional level. Following problems are worthwhile to explore for the modernization of Chinese drugs: (1) Combining the TCM chemistry and pharmacology, more attention on water soluble ingredients such as polysaccharide study should be paid; (2) Combining the TCM recipe chemistry and single drug chemistry; (3) Combining the TCM clinical pharmacology and basic pharmacology; (4) Combining the researching and exploitation of Chinese drugs.

21st century is coming, the pharmaceutical society abroad has great interest in Chinese drugs, we engaged in the cause of TCM and pharmacology should take the manufacturing of new Chinese drugs as our life-long goal, so as to make the Chinese drugs in the new century to appear as brilliant pearls among international medical societies.

Striding Forward Towards High Level TCM – WM

Zhang Zhinan (张之南)

Peking Union Hospital, Beijing (100730)

To a patient, western doctor analyzes and diagnoses according to western theory, while the traditional Chinese doctor analyzes according to four diagnostic methods and eight principal syndromes to decide the theory-principle-recipe-drug for the patient, and then add these two traditional and western methods together for use, this is additive traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) and western medicine (WM) treatment. When both of them are effective, it is mutual replaceable, but without any synergistic effect, then it is not necessary to use them simultaneously, at least one of them can be greatly simplified. If the western doctor understands some TCM, or traditional doctor understands some WM, the treatment gives full play on the characteristics of each medicine to complement one another, this is complementary integration of TCM and WM treatment. When both of them are effective, it is mutual replaceable, but without any synergistic effect, then it is not necessary to use them simultaneously, at least one of them can be greatly simplified. If the western doctor understands some TCM, or traditional doctor understands some WM, the treatment gives full play on the characteristics of each medicine to complement one another, this is complementary integration of TCM and WM. Both medicines can shoot the arrow at the target, and display its advantage, then under the premise of ensuring the efficacy, unnecessary repetition can be avoided. If the cognition on disease of TCM and WM can merge into one entity, under the guidance of unified theory, to determine the therapeutical strategy and aim, in order to realize the treatment purpose, adopting the advantage of both medical treatments, jointly using it, either using Chinese drugs with western approach, or using western drugs with traditional approach, or using it singly. The theoretical and cognitive integration is the integration of highest level, which should be strived for.

The theoretical combination can promote the TCM-WM to develop deeply, it can open up broader integration field, and might make the mode of TCM-WM more flexible and varied, possibly it will stimulate some new viewpoint, new theory, new way of thinking and new approach. Recently, the study on “promoting blood circulation to remove stasis” leads to the discovery of new anti-oxidants, the deep going study on paroxysmal nocturnal hemoglobinuria leads to rational orientation of the treatment purpose of TCM-WM, which makes us have further understanding to the significance of theoretical integration of TCM-WM.