Current Status of Mind-Body Medicine as Complementary Alternative Medicine in Korea

Sae-il Chun
M.D. Graduate School of Complementary Alternative Medicine, Pochon CHA University, Korea

Abstract: The ultimate goal of eliminating diseases and maintaining normal health is same both in western(modern) medicine and oriental(traditional) medicine. At the present time, the western medicine tends to take more scientific technological approach in their practice while the oriental medicine still maintain more humanistic approach. 5000 year old traditional medicine still challenges the 21 century scientific modern medicine in the field of clinical practices. The "disease-oriented" western medicine classify the human condition as "diseased and non-diseased" states. In the mean time the "health-oriented" oriental medicine classify it into "healthy and unhealthy" states. For the maintenance of normal health, five principles are emphasized. They are ① eat right, ② move right, ③ sleep right, ④ breathe right, and ⑤ mind right. To reverse an unhealthy condition back to normal healthy state, the methods of ① natural substance therapy, ② exercise therapy, and ③ stimulation therapies including acupuncture, moxibustion, finger pressure, and cupping techniques. In order to eliminate the diseases, four distinct approaches namely ① chemical, ② physical, ③ psychological, and ④ surgical treatments are utilized. There are so many different kinds of traditional medicine, hidden popular folk medicine, and various less recognized techniques and theories of healing arts. Some are originated in oriental culture while others are originated in western culture. Experts of western medicine claim that only those informations clarified or proven by the objective and scientific methodology can be recognized as a part of western (conventional) medicine. All other medical cares and health care modalities are collectively labelled as "alternative medicine or complementary medicine". In United States and other European countries the alternative medicine include oriental medicine, but in far eastern region particularly in Korea, taking the dual licensing system, the oriental medicine is not included in alternative medicine. According to most recent discussions regarding the definition of health by WHO is that "total health should include physical, mental, psych-social, and spiritual wellbeing". Alternative medicine provides wider range of methodology to handle this new concept of total health. The oriental medicine and alternative medicine share a common characteristics in that they adopt humanistic approach for the care of a whole person, that is "heal a person" and not merely "cure an organic disease". The mind consists of emotion, knowing, consciousness, intuition, and soul factor, whereas the body consists of form, strength, energy field, vital force, and genetic factor. When all these ten mind-body factors are in harmony and balance to each other, the healing mechanism is activated to its maximal level. Accordingly total health can be achieved only when they are in full harmony.

1. Introduction

"Medicine" itself is not exactly a science, but it is an art - a healing art. Throughout history the humankind have used shamanism, witchcraft, religions, metaphysics, philosophy, science and/or technology as a tool in making better understanding and further improvement of healing art.

It can be generally said that the western culture has been more materially oriented while the oriental culture has been more spiritually oriented. Although
western and eastern civilization have developed somewhat different cultural characteristics and historically influenced each other, the western culture was known to have made a greater contribution in development of materialistic advancement because the west got all the credit for the achievements in science and technology, while the eastern culture played more important role in establishing the spiritual one because all major religions such as Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Taoism, and Judaism were born in the east (orient).

Our brain has characteristics of lateralization. The left side brain (left hemisphere) tends to conduct more scientific, logic, mathematical, linear, analytical way of thinking while the right side brain (right hemisphere) conducts intuitive, imaginative, comprehensive, metaphoric, spiritual way of thinking. The western culture seemed to rely more on left brain, and the oriental culture might have followed more right brain activity.

Each nation or ethnic group in the world has their own unique background of culture, custom, tradition, philosophy, and sense of value. For example Korean people maintain a unique way of perceiving life and death. In English "he passed away" has the same meaning as "he has died". This expression seems to indicate that 'a life comes from one direction and goes away to the other direction' accordingly passing away. In Korea the most polite way of saying "he has died" is to say as "he has gone back". This expression indicate that a life comes from somewhere and goes back to where he came from. Traditionally Korean people believe that a home is a station of life to where a life arrives and from where a life leaves. In this view life should be born at their own home, and also dying at their own home has the same significance. To them 'being born' and 'dying' at the place other than their own home is considered to be a disgraceful thing. Because of this traditional belief, a dying patient in a hospital will go home to die instead of going in to the hospital.

Korea, as a nearly 4400 year old nation, has had a long history of traditional medicine which consist of herbology, therapeutic exercise, and stimulation therapies. The stimulation therapies include Chim (acupuncture), Tdum (moxibustion), Jiahp (ischemic compression), and Buhang (negative pressure therapy). Concept of "Qi or Chi (Vital Force)" is not merely popular in Korea. It is an essential part of their daily living. The word "Qi" is used all the time in their everyday conversation and practice of "Qi" is applied intentionally or unknowingly in their activities of daily living. For many Koreans the reliance and dependence to the traditional medicine is almost religious. The influence of traditional medicine in the Korean society is relatively greater than any other country in the world. Korea maintains a dual licensing system of medical doctors, one being doctor of western medicine (M.D.) and another being doctor of oriental medicine (O.M.D.). There are 41 medical schools of western medicine and 11 medical schools of oriental medicine in Korea. The number of medical schools, medical students, doctors in oriental medicine per population compared to those of western medicine are greatest in the world.

Unlike in rest of the world, the oriental medicine is not included in the categories of alternative medicine in Korea.

2. Difference between western and oriental medicine

There are no clear cut delineations between the two medicines because many areas are similar, overlapped and superimposed. It can not be said, however, that they are same. Some of the noticeable major differences between the two medicines are as follows ;

① System of knowledge
Primary the western medicine is based on science and technology while the oriental medicine is based on philosophy and metaphysics. The oriental medicine strongly emphasizes the concept of Qi (or Chi) which is a vital force or natural healing energy, Um-Yang (or Yin-Yang) which is the relativity establishing balance and harmony, and five elements which are the basic factors regulating the laws of change.

② Perception
The western medicine takes a logic and objective perception and the oriental medicine intuitive and subjective one. The western medicine emphasizes statistics which provide objective generalized information, and the oriental medicine emphasize anecdotal report which provide subjective individualized characteristics.

③ Understanding

In order to understand the natural phenomena the western medicine takes a eccentric (out-going) and analytical approach. They keep chopping things up into smaller pieces to investigate them, and specialization and subspecialization are the tendency. They view that normal whole is the sum of normal pieces. On the other hand the oriental medicine takes a concentric (in-coming) and wholistic approach. All phenomena are centered in to oneness. One human being is not an independent entity but is an inter-dependent element existing as a part of the whole.

④ Observation

The western medicine observe and confirm the phenomena by means of experiment while the oriental medicine takes the accumulated experiences as a means of confirmation.

⑤ Treatment

The western medicine tends to emphasize an offensive therapeutic approach, and the oriental medicine tends to use a defensive therapeutic approach. An ancient teaching says "ordinary man tries to find the fault from others while special man tries to find it in himself". This teaching applies to medical practices. The western medicine tries to identify the cause of trouble from outside just like an infection caused by bacteria coming from outside and so it takes such aggressive methods as killing (antibiotics), cutting (surgery), or blocks. The oriental medicine tends to identify the problem from inside just like a lowered immune mechanism in himself so that it takes such defensive methods as using tonics (liver tonics, stomach tonics etc.), dietary regimen or self-trained exercises.

⑥ Measurement

The western medicine emphasizes accuracy while the oriental medicine emphasizes adequacy. For example one inch in western culture is exactly same length where-ever you apply to. In the mean time, however, one body-inch (tsun) on man using in oriental medicine is different from one individual to the other. There are pre-determined inch system on the body segments. For instance, the length between elbow and wrist are pre-defined as having twelve division (body inches) so that one body inch indicates one out of twelve division, that one inch on tall adult is much longer than one inch on a tiny child, and that one inch falls on the same relative point regardless of the size of the individual. One is "accurate inch" and the other is "adequate inch".

⑦ Rapport formation

The doctor-patient relationship is different between western and oriental medicine in that the western medicine takes 'technological' and the oriental medicine 'humanistic' approach. In western medicine the doctor is a "doer" and the patient is a "passive recipient" while in oriental medicine the patient becomes a "doer" and the doctor plays a role as an "instructor".

⑧ Study

The western medicine follows a study of "what" and "How" while the oriental medicine follows a study of "why" and "it ought to be". For example the western medicine asks "what happens during sleep?" while the oriental medicine ask "why we have to sleep anyway?".

⑨ Mechanism

The western medicine emphasizes "anatomy and physiology" while the oriental medicine emphasizes "function and role". The concept of "Meridian, Acupuncture point, Envelope of heart, Tripple Burner" are nonexisting in the western medicine although they are most important functional units in the oriental medicine.

⑩ Orientation

The western medicine is "disease oriented" while the oriental medicine is "health oriented". In western medicine everything is centered around the disease like "where is the disease?", "how you eliminate the disease?" etc. On the other hand in oriental medicine the main subjects are like "how you maintain a health?", "how you lose health?", or "how you return
to normal health?" etc.

3. Complementary Alternative Medicine

Recent international trend of globalization has brought an information explosion and transcultural exchange of science, technology, arts and medicine. There are so many different kinds of traditional medicine, hidden popular folk medicine, and various less recognized techniques and theories of healing arts. Some are originated in oriental culture while others are originated in western culture. Experts of western medicine claim that only those informations clarified or proven by the objective and scientific methodology can be recognized as a part of western (orthodox or conventional) medicine. All kinds of traditional medicines, folk medicines, and many other fragments of medical techniques and theories are collectively labelled as "alternative medicine or complementary medicine".

There are clear evidence that the western medicine, oriental medicine, and alternative medicine all are complimentary to each other. If and when all the complimentary components existing in various healing arts together in one medicine, a new integrated comprehensive wholistic medicine can be produced. In most of the countries in the world except for Korea the oriental medicine is included in the alternative medicine. On the other hand in Korea, the oriental medicine is not included in the category of alternative medicines. Here anything other than orthodox conventional western medicine and traditional Korean medicine are considered to be an alternative medicine. There are 200 or more different kinds of alternative medicine known today, and approximately 50 relatively better known alternative medicines are listed below.

A. Alternative Medicine closely related to Western Medicine

(1) Osteopathic Medicine (整骨醫學)  
(2) Podiatric Medicine (足部醫學)  
(3) Chiropractic Medicine (脊柱矯正 醫學)  
(4) Chelation Therapy (重金屬 除去 療法)  
(5) Detoxification Therapy (解毒療法)  
(6) Hypnotherapy (催眠療法)  
(7) Body-Mind Therapy (心身醫學)  
(8) Energy Medicine  
(9) Nutritional Supplement (營養療法)  
(10) Orthomolecular Medicine (分子正形醫學)  
(11) Enzyme Therapy  
(12) Environemental Medicine  
(13) Oxygen Therapy (酸素療法)  
(14) Magnetic Field Therapy (磁場療法)  
(15) Applied Kinesiology (應用 運動學)  
(16) Bodywork  
(17) Rolfing  
(18) Dream Therapy  
(19) Recreation Therapy (娛樂治療)  
(20) Magic Therapy (魔術療法)  
(21) Neural Therapy (神經治療)  
(22) Reconstructive Therapy (再建療法)  
(23) Cell Therapy (細胞治療)  
(24) Craniosacral Therap (頭蓋 脈骨 療法)  
(25) Iridology (虹彩 療法)  
(26) Autogenic Therapy (自發療法)  
(27) Reichian Therapy  
(28) Neuro-Linguistic Programming  
(29) Guided Imagery (導引想像療法)  
(30) Biofeedback Therapy  
(31) Dance Therapy (舞蹈療法)  
(32) Biological Dentistry (生物學的 齒科治療法)  

B. Alternative Medicine closely related to Oriental Medicine

(1) Ayurvedic Medicine (自然醫學)  
(2) Naturopathic Medicine (自然療法)  
(3) Transcendental Meditation  
(4) Yoga  
(5) Qigong Therapy (氣功治療)  
(6) Herbal Medicine (草藥療法)  
(7) Flower Remedies (花草療法)  
(8) Aromatherapy (香氣療法)  
(9) Sound Therapy  
(10) Horticulture Therapy (園藝療法)  
(11) Reflexolgy (反射療法)  
(12) Bee Venom Therapy (蜂針療法)  
(13) Touch (接觸療法)  
(14) Psychic Healing (心靈治療法)
C. Alternative Medicine closely related to both Western and Oriental Medicine

(1) Homeopathic Medicine (同種療法)
(2) Diet Therapy (食餌療法)
(3) Fasting (絶食療法)
(4) Juice Therapy (腸療法)
(5) Colon Therapy (腸線療法)
(6) Light Therapy (光線療法)
(7) Hydrotherapy (水治療)
(8) Hyperthermia (高熱療法)
(9) Quantum Medicine (陽子医学)
(10) Urine Therapy (尿療法)

4. Health Maintenance

Human condition can be divided into three stages - namely healthy stage, unhealthy stage, and diseased stage. The 1st healthy stage is when the vital force (natural healing energy or Qi) is well balanced and harmonious, the 2nd unhealthy stage is when the vital force lost its balance and harmony but no mechanical damage yet, and the 3rd diseased stage is when there are actual mechanical damage of the tissues (pathological changes).

Health and Disease

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<tr>
<th>Stage I</th>
<th>Stage II</th>
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<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Un-Health (Non-Disease)</td>
<td>Disease</td>
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Oriental Medicine

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<th>Health</th>
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Western Medicine

| Non-Disease | Disease |

A. To maintain (stage I) health

One may lose his health by one of the three wrong doings. Firstly, you do the "don'ts", secondly, you don't do the "must", and thirdly, you do but "wrong way". Here are the five commandments to maintain normal health.

① Eat right
* Eat well-balanced and harmonized diet.
* Eat regularly three meals a day. Don't skip a meal.
* Eat small and slowly.
* Eat with concentrated mind.

② Move right
* Exercise with balanced motion; slow and fast, straight and curved, stretching and strengthening.
* Exercise regularly; light everyday, vigorous 2-3 times a week.
* Exercise with concentrated mind. Motion and mind go together.

③ Sleep right
* Sleep enough and regularly.
* Sleep according to your rhythm; lark type or owl type.
* Sleep with empty mind.

④ Breathe right
* Avoid polluted air.
* Avoid smoking.
* Practice breathing exercise with concentrated mind.

⑤ Mind right
* Manage stress without avoiding it.
* Positive thinking.
* Practice "empty mind".

B. To reverse (stage II) unhealth to health

In order to reverse an unhealthy state to a normal healthy state the following methods are utilized.

① Natural substance therapy
Herbal plant, animal, mineral.

② Exercise therapy
Qi-Kong (or Chi Kung) exercises included.

③ Stimulation therapy
To activate a natural healing force of the body, the reaction points on the body surface are stimulated by means of heat, positive pressure, negative (suction) pressure, and needle.
C. To eliminate (stage III) disease

In order to identify, localize, and eliminate the diseases, the followings are utilized.

1. Chemical treatment
2. Physical treatment
3. Psychological treatment
4. Surgical treatment

5. Scientific Studies on Oriental and Alternative Medicine

The research directions toward oriental medicine and alternative medicine are four categories - namely, anatomico-histologic, electro-magnetic, metabolico-humoral, and psycho-somatic directions. The oriental medicine and alternative medicine share some directions of research activities. Here are some examples of researches on acupuncture.

Anatomico-histologic approach.

1. An acupuncture researcher Kim Bong Han claimed to have histologically identified structures of meridian and acupuncture points. 2. The needles were inserted at the main acupuncture points on a cadaver, and dissected. Most of the inserted needles were located on or near the main trunks of peripheral nerves. 3. When acupuncture treatment was given to a paraplegic patient, therapeutic efficacy was shown only when the acupuncture needles were inserted on the skin where autonomic nervous activities such as sweating are intact, but not on the spots where autonomic activities are impaired. 4. The referred pain in a patient with angina pectoris or myocardial infarction follow the distribution of 'heart meridian' of traditional medicine. 5. Stimulation of certain spot of skin with heat elicit a reflexic response to a intestine with arteriolar dilatation and capillary congestion, while cold stimulation on the same spot showed arteriolar constriction with capillary ischemia.

Electro-magnetic approach.

1. Acupuncture points demonstrated the lowest galvanic skin resistance compared to the surrounding skin area. This finding indicates that acupuncture points have highest skin conductivity. 2. The electrical response recorded from a micro pipette inserted in thalamus disappears when analgesic acupuncture stimulation was applied. 3. The changes of quality of pulse due to auriculo-cardiac reflect are more prominent on certain specific frequencies of electricity only.

Metabolico-humoral approach.

1. When a cross circulation of blood was made between two animals as an experimental model and only one animal was stimulated with acupuncture needles, analgesic effect was shown not only on needled animal but also non-acupuncture animal. This indicates that needling on one animal released certain analgesic hormone to the other un-acupuncture animal through the cross circulation. 2. Through vigorous and continuous acupuncture needle stimulation, endomorphin is secreted reaching the plateau at around 20 minutes after the initial needling. 3. acupuncture anesthesia and treatment of drug withdrawal syndrome can be explained with the release of endorphin.

Psycho-somatic approach.

1. Easily hypnotizable individual showed better acupuncture efficacy. 2. Anesthetic response was shown on the expected body part, but not on the suggested part where a strong psychological suggestion was given. 3. A surgical operation can be done under acupuncture anesthesia on the animals which do not have placebo effect.

6. Conclusion

Western culture developed "science and technology oriented" western medicine, while oriental culture developed "metaphysics and philosophy oriented" oriental medicine. There have been officially unrecognized traditional medicine, folk medicine, and fragmented medical theories and techniques scattered all over the world in both western and oriental cultures. Recently those medicines which do not belong to the orthodox conventional medicine is labelled as "alternative medicine or complementary medicine". In United States and other European countries the
alternative medicine include oriental medicine, but in far eastern region particularly in Korea the oriental medicine is not included in alternative medicine. In Korea both western and oriental medicine are considered to be "conventional medicine". Accordingly alternative medicine is "the medicine other than conventional medicine".

According to most recent definition of health by WHO is that total health should include physical, mental, psychological, emotional, social, and spiritual health. Alternative medicine provides wider range of methodology to handle this new concept of total health. The oriental medicine, alternative medicine, and rehabilitation medicine share a common characteristics in that all three medicines adopt humanistic approach for the care of a whole person, that is "heal a person" and not merely "cure an organic disease". Some serious objective and scientific researches should be done on the oriental medicine and the alternative medicine. The current research activities include anatomico-histologic, electromagnetic, metabolical-humoral, and psycho-somatic directions.

References