Ayurveda and traditional Chinese medicine: a comparative overview

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Abstract

Ayurveda, the traditional Indian medicine (TIM) and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) remain the most ancient yet living traditions. There has been increased global interest in traditional medicine. Efforts to monitor and regulate herbal drugs and traditional medicine are underway. China has been successful in promoting its therapies with more research and science-based approach, while Ayurveda still needs more extensive scientific research and evidence base. This review gives an overview of basic principles and commonalities of TIM and TCM and discusses key determinants of success, which these great traditions need to address to compete in global markets.
The traditional medicines, Ayurveda (Traditional Indian Medicine, or TIM) and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), are based on balance and harmony on all levels of existence; whereas Western medicine views the patient as a distinctly physical entity, traditional healing methods see the patient as existing in multiple planes. By viewing the patient as a whole entity, rather than attempting to objectify his/her subjective experience of life, TIM and TCM have major implications in the treatment of cancers.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) has been in existence for about 5000 years, and is one of the most widely accepted forms of medicine. TCM is based on the idea of qi, life force energy, flowing through our bodies. Traditional Chinese Medicine considers the human at the center of the universe as an antenna between celestial and earthly elements. Water, earth, metal, wood and fire are the five elements of the material world. The world is a single unit and its movement gives rise to yin and yang, the two main opposing aspects.


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