

# The Role of Chinese Medicine in Chronic Diseases

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**Abstract.** The course of chronic disease is long and the etiology is complex. With the development of society, the occurrence of chronic disease is gradually becoming younger and the incidence is getting higher and higher. At present, the prevention and control of chronic diseases are mainly palliatives, intervention lags behind other disadvantages. Society is paying more and more attention to the prevention and control of chronic diseases. Due to various factors, the quality of life of many chronic disease patients is significantly different. TCM has diversified ways, precise diagnosis, and treatment of syndrome differentiation thought and means of diagnosis and treatment, TCM technology and operability, has a unique role in health management, health care, and other aspects so TCM has an important significance in the prevention and control of chronic diseases. From the Angle of TCM prevention of chronic diseases, this paper expounds on the theory of TCM prevention of chronic diseases, the key points of attention, and the methods of TCM treatment of chronic diseases. It can be concluded from the literature that the combination of evidence-based treatment of TCM and modern medical technology can improve the condition of patients to some extent. If the theory of "treatment before treatment" of TCM is applied to public health management.

**Keywords:** TCM, Chronic diseases, Prevention and control.

## 1. Introduction

Chronic disease mainly refers to a kind of disease that does not constitute infection and has complex etiology and needs to be accumulated for a long time. Once the prevention and treatment are not timely, it can cause damage to the life and property of the patients and aggravate the economic burden of the disease. In recent years, deaths caused by chronic diseases have accounted for more than 80 percent of the country's total deaths. With the implementation of the Law of the People's Republic of China on TCM (TCM) and the promulgation of the Plan for the Prevention and Control of Chronic Diseases of China (2017-2025), the development of TCM has been raised to the legal level in related fields such as prevention and health care and has been integrated into basic public health service projects for coordination and implementation. Combined with the theory of prevention and health care of TCM (TCM), such as "cure the disease" and holistic view, it can be found that TCM has the advantages of significant curative effect and small adverse reactions in the prevention and control of chronic diseases. As a traditional Chinese culture, TCM has a better mass foundation and cultural deposits. The current application of TCM to prevent and control chronic diseases is in line with the current policy situation and medical situation and can alleviate the current severe situation of high mortality of chronic diseases in China to a certain extent, which is of great significance for the prevention and control of chronic diseases and the development of TCM.

According to the Yearbook of Chinese Traditional Medicine and the statistics of the National Health and Family Planning Commission. The number of TCM medical institutions, the number of beds, the financial allocations for health, and the number of practitioners has been steadily increasing in recent years [1]. Since the implementation of China's Work Plan for Prevention and Treatment of Chronic Diseases (2012-2015), the growth rate of beds and practitioners in preventive healthcare departments has been relatively improved. The national health department allocates more funds for medical and health services than in previous years, and gradually attaches importance to the construction of TCM medical institutions. In addition, the service items of TCM prevention and control of chronic diseases are more diverse, which can better meet the growing medical needs to some extent. According to a survey conducted in 14 provinces of China, 63.18% of patients with chronic diseases are willing to choose TCM hospitals for treatment after diagnosis, and they are

relatively approved of TCM. At different stages of the disease, 31.62% of the patients chose to apply TCM for treatment when the disease was aggravated, and 35.24% of the patients applied TCM for treatment immediately after diagnosis [2]. Meanwhile, the satisfaction of the patients at TCM hospitals and community health service centers was higher than that of rural town health centers and private clinics [3]. In general, the majority of patients are more accepting of the application of TCM to prevent and control chronic diseases, but overall satisfaction is low.

Based on the above background, from the perspective of TCM prevention of chronic diseases, this paper expounds on the theory of TCM prevention of chronic diseases, points of attention, and methods of TCM treatment of chronic diseases. It can be concluded from the literature that the combination of evidence-based treatment of TCM and modern medical technology can improve the condition of patients to some extent. If the theory of "treatment before treatment" of TCM is applied to public health management, it can promote the development of TCM in the prevention and treatment of chronic diseases [4].

## **2. Advantages of TCM in the treatment of chronic diseases**

### **2.1. Individualized diagnosis mode based on syndrome differentiation is mainly used in TCM**

Looking, smelling, asking, and cutting are four diagnostic methods to diagnose diseases, aiming to understand the dynamic changes of diseases according to the basic health status of the human body and related health information and to analyze and judge the corresponding treatment methods. On the one hand, this diagnostic model can achieve the purpose of individualized diagnosis and treatment to a certain extent. It has something in common with Western precision medicine. To lay the foundation for promoting the medical development of integrated Chinese and western medicine. On the other hand, early intervention can be implemented for different chronic diseases, so as to effectively prevent and control chronic diseases [5].

Chronic diseases have a longer course. A certain medicine or prescription may not have the corresponding effect on a certain type of chronic diseases, such as chronic rhinitis. There are dozens of Chinese and Western medicines that can treat chronic rhinitis, but none of them can completely cure it. Compared with Western medicine treatment. The use of TCM means for syndrome differentiation treatment, according to the different stages of the course of the disease to determine what syndromes, no disease can be prevented in advance. If patients are sick, they can provide a reference for the clinical prescription medication through syndrome differentiation, and adjust the number of drugs according to the change of the condition [6]. This individualized diagnosis and treatment model can improve the effects.

### **2.2. TCM concept of "Cure disease"**

The idea of "treating and preventing disease" has always been one of the core concepts of TCM. This concept mainly contains not disease prevention first, both Hyman and Chai defense as meaning. The idea of "cure the disease" is the theoretical basis of TCM prevention and health care, but also the advantage of TCM health management. It mainly advocates a way to use early intervention to achieve effective health maintenance and disease prevention and treatment goals. Under the premise of syndrome differentiation and treatment, different personalized programs can be established according to different people's health conditions. At the same time, under the idea of "treating diseases without disease", the incidence of chronic diseases can be reduced by preventing diseases before they occur, and the health intervention measures of TCM can be gradually improved to improve the quality of life of patients with chronic diseases [7].

### **2.3. Overall concept and regulation of TCM**

The holistic view of Chinese medicine refers to the unity of the whole of the person himself, the unity of the person with nature, and the social environment. At the same time, from the perspective of social medicine, natural changes such as seasons and climate can indirectly affect some changes

in the human body, so that the human body can adapt to the changes and changes. Social factors in the social environment, such as economy, politics, and lifestyle, also indirectly affect the health of the human body and may form the pathogenic factors of chronic diseases in many cases. When the holistic concept is applied in the prevention and control of chronic diseases in TCM, the disease information of patients can be comprehensively grasped, the viscera can be coordinated through relevant intervention means, and the balance between the constant movement of human body and nature and society can be emphasized to form a theory of holistic regulation [8]. Compared with the current multi-disciplinary classification prevention and the emphasis on the prevention of a class of chronic diseases, the holistic view of TCM is a theoretical innovation. It has advantages in the prevention and control of chronic diseases, especially in the current medical treatment lack of effective diagnosis of chronic disease risk state and other aspects.

#### **2.4. Identification of TCM constitution**

The earliest work of TCM constitution theory is Huangdi Neijing, which mainly runs through many aspects such as physiology and pathology, diagnosis, and treatment, and has a great influence on the development of TCM diagnostics [9]. Constitution mainly refers to the objective life phenomena existing in the human body, which plays an important role in the outcome and development direction of the disease. The difference in constitution between people leads to the different susceptibility of people with different constitutions to the disease, the corresponding development law of the disease is also different, and the drug use and reaction are different. The physical difference is the practice of treating based on syndrome differentiation and reflects the principle of "curing the root cause" to a certain extent [10]. The development of the physical condition and chronic disease is long-term and also affected by the environment, lifestyle, and other factors, which reflects the idea of "curing diseases" in TCM.

If the health condition of the human body is adjusted, ultimately achieves the goal of reducing the probability of disease. According to literature and epidemiological analysis, the constitution is related to the formation of chronic diseases [11]. At present, the prevention and control of chronic diseases are mainly carried out from the aspects of the body, diet, bad habits, and so on. TCM constitution identification can be based on different constitution types, as early as possible to design prevention programs, so as to carry out prevention, preclinical prevention, quality control, and anti-change, to achieve targeted health intervention.

### **3. Countermeasures for prevention and control of chronic diseases in TCM**

#### **3.1. Strengthen the combination and communication between TCM and modern medicine**

The Work Plan for the Prevention and Treatment of Chronic Diseases in China (2017-2025) emphasizes that exchanges between modern medicine and TCM should be strengthened. At the same time, we will reduce the incidence rate and mortality of chronic diseases among the elderly by combining medical care with health care and TCM health care, and realize the application of TCM theory and technology to China's basic disease control system [12]. Chronic diseases have complex causes and long courses, which need to be treated constantly. The chemical drug treatment of modern medicine causes patients concern due to adverse drug reactions. As a traditional medicine in China, Chinese medicine has gained more valuable experience through long-term practice. From the perspective of demand, TCM health care, acupuncture, massage, diet therapy, and other technologies can not only target the sick population, but also the general population and high-risk groups, meeting the needs of China's medical and health care system, and the public's awareness and satisfaction of TCM in the prevention and control of chronic diseases have increased year by year. TCM can, to a certain extent, supplement the deficiencies of modern medicine in the prevention and control of chronic diseases, the cooperation between the two promotes the construction of integrated Chinese and Western medicine systems [13]. Therefore, it is necessary to vigorously promote and introduce the service mode of chronic disease prevention and actively carry out pilot projects in different regions

and different medical institutions, and provide practical experience for the innovative development of chronic disease prevention and control systems in China.

### **3.2. Give play to the characteristics and advantages of TCM health intervention**

#### **3.2.1. Health education with Chinese medicine characteristics**

Due to the complex causes of chronic diseases, there is no radical cure method at present, so it is necessary to strengthen preventive measures. For the non-diseased groups of chronic diseases, health education has become a necessary means. The thought of "treating the disease before it occurs" of TCM emphasizes that before the occurrence of the disease, the emotion, diet, healthy living, and proper traditional healthcare exercises such as Taijiquan should be adjusted according to the situation of the patient [14]. At the same time, acupuncture and massage can be used to adjust the physiological state of the body as a whole, so that the human body can maintain a stable and healthy state and achieve the purpose of prevention and health care. In addition, personalized health education can be carried out for different individuals to improve people's physical fitness, reduce the cause of disease and reduce the incidence rate of chronic diseases by popularizing the theory of TCM health preservation and the knowledge about the occurrence of chronic diseases.

#### **3.2.2. Health risk assessment and health management based on the basic theory of TCM**

As an integral part of health management, risk assessment plays an important role in analyzing and judging the correlation between risk factors and incidence rate and mortality of chronic diseases. Through health risk assessment, we can determine the strength of the role of risk factors on a disease, clarify the key points of prevention and control, and implement effective health management measures. TCM theory proposes that pathogenic factors act on the human body in various ways, and show a series of diseases by destroying the balance of yin and yang in the human body. Therefore, modern medicine has included symptoms in the process of disease occurrence, development, and outcome in the disease risk assessment model, which can more accurately prevent a series of chronic diseases at an earlier stage and provide a strong basis for health intervention [15].

#### **3.2.3. Personalized treatment thought based on people**

Chronic diseases have complex causes and diverse symptoms. Even the same disease will show different symptoms, so it is necessary to follow the personalized idea in the diagnosis and treatment process. Under the guidance of the thought of "treatment based on syndrome differentiation" and "prevention of disease" in TCM, we can define the regularity and state of the onset of some chronic diseases, and aim at the physiological state of different organisms to achieve "prevention of disease" and "prevention of recovery after disease", so as to establish a personalized health management program. By grasping the regularity of some chronic diseases, we can improve the intervention measures to be implemented after the onset of the disease, and reduce the mortality of chronic diseases [16].

### **3.3. Grasp development opportunities and give full play to the advantages of mobile social networks**

With the gradual development and improvement of mobile social networks (MSNs) and the further popularization of mobile terminals, the way of communication between people has also changed. MSNs have been widely used in the field of medical and health services. Looking at the existing application research, MSNs can closely combine cyberspace with real needs, build a virtual environment, conveniently establish multi-party connections at anytime, anywhere, on topics and objects of interest, widely share information, and timely track and learn the results of the real world. Among them, "multiple parties" can cover medical staff, pharmacists, nutritionists, patients, family members, key health care groups, high-risk groups, sub-health groups, healthy people, and other types of personnel (even background knowledge base); "information" includes text, graphics, images, animation, audio, video and other media information; "results" can involve prevention, medical treatment, health care, rehabilitation Health education and other resources (such as physical

examination, symptoms, medication, daily life, etc. of patients, or the latest treatment/prevention methods, means and other knowledge of diseases). Therefore, MSNs can provide a multi-dimensional, open, shared and collaborative virtual environment for chronic disease prevention and control, providing new opportunities for the development of chronic disease prevention and control in China.

In the face of the severe trend of increasing incidence rate and mortality of chronic diseases, we should pay attention to the rapid development of MSNs. The mode of "MSNs+chronic disease prevention and control" can be added to the user data analysis system through the application of big data, data network, cloud computing and other artificial intelligence technologies to establish a standard mathematical model, analyze the information obtained, and achieve accurate classification of different information between people. At the same time, the TCM health intervention system should comprehensively apply the characteristic concepts of syndrome differentiation, "prevention of disease" and the holistic view to a more standardized classification of chronic diseases, judge the situation of different users through the data provided by the data analysis system, and give a more personalized health intervention plan in combination with diagnostics, kinematics, health care, and other knowledge to achieve TCM health intervention.

#### 4. Conclusion

Chronic diseases have a relatively long course of the disease and lack accurate biological pathogenic factors. The etiology is relatively complex and is closely related to smoking, alcoholism, unreasonable diets, and other bad behaviors. These behaviors cause great damage to individual health and lead to a decline in the overall health of society. Due to various factors, there are obvious differences in chronic diseases. TCM has diversified ways of diagnosis and treatment, accurate dialectical ideas, and means of diagnosis and treatment. TCM is highly operational and has a unique role in health management, health care, and other aspects, which makes TCM play an important role in the prevention and control of chronic diseases. According to the holistic view of TCM, the manifestations of chronic diseases are different, but in the final analysis, they are all local manifestations of human overall diseases. Although the causes are complex and changeable, they are all related to their own sports, food, daily living, and other aspects. Any factor that has problems will lead to the emergence of diseases. The complexity of chronic diseases determines that it is very difficult to intervene. Therefore, it is necessary for TCM to carry out comprehensive interventions for chronic diseases. Guided by the idea of "treating the disease before it occurs" and combined with effective means such as health intervention in modern medicine, it gives full play to the advantages of TCM concepts such as syndrome differentiation, holistic concept, and physique theory. It aims to realize a way of integrating health education, examining the disease and seeking the cause, grasping the whole, regulating the constitution, and dredging the meridians. This six-in-one comprehensive intervention mode, which takes people as the theme, self-intervention as the main part, and medical intervention as the auxiliary part, can realize the whole control from the initial health examination to the subsequent treatment of diseases. Comprehensive intervention can effectively prevent the occurrence of chronic diseases.

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