



Integrative Oncology Notes

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Integrative oncology; an idea whose time has come

The need for an association of like-minded practitioners from a TCM background to engage in evidence based integrative oncology has never been greater. In my studies in Australia and China and my meetings with orthodox oncologists, I have found both an increasing acceptance of the idea of integration and an increasing number of studies on the efficacy of botanical, non-standard interventions.

When I was at the Society of Integrative Oncologists (SIO) conference in Shanghai in April 2008, where I spoke on 'Inflammation and the yin/yang of the Immune System', I found high interest in Chinese herbs and Oncology. Such persons as Lorenzo Cohen of MD Anderson Cancer Centre, Steven Sagar of McMasters University and Berry Cassileth of Sloan-Kettering all expressed interest in, not only the compounds and herbs but the idea of pattern discrimination in individualising therapeutic approaches to treatment.

We as Chinese herbalists have a treasure in not only our pharmacopeia but in the traditions handed down to us by the great masters. However, this is not enough. We must formalise the treatments and the diagnosis within the context of modern science. For all its failings, modern medicine and its research is the paradigm of our age and we risk being sidelined if we do not begin to work within the paradigm.

When I read the literature coming out of China and when I meet the young practitioners/researchers I am struck by their interest and adherence to science. They seem most interested in research, while respecting their heritage. We could do no less.

Daniel