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Short Communication

Implementation Science in International Practice of Chinese Medicine and Traditional Medicine

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Background

Traditional medicine(TM) is found in almost every country in the world and the demand for its services is increasing. Chinese medicine (CM) has been used to protect human's health for thousands of years, and has been developed systematic medical theories and varieties of interventions [1-2], which makes it as one of the representatives of TM or Complementary & Alternative Medicine (CAM). For its varieties of interventions of preventing and treating diseases, as well as maintaining wellness, the application of CM/TM makes it possible to provide more medical services to more people worldwide [3]. Implementation science (IS) research combines comprehensive and scientific study of methods to promote the systematic uptake of research findings and effective evidence-based practices into routine practice, aims to improve the adoption and dissemination of specific proven clinical interventions, drugs, or policies and hence to give more high-quality and effective health services [4-5]. It focuses on the roles of practitioners, policy makers, institutions, etc. in the implementation of health interventions, concerns more about how a health intervention can be executed, and why does it effective or noneffective [6]. Thus, IS research may provide scientific methods for spreading CM and TM, which might help evaluate and analyze the implementation effects and status of CM/TM, impact factors of the implementation of an intervention, and then develop the practical strategy to spread and adjust different the implementation period.

Keywords: Chinese Medicine; Traditional Medicine; Implementation Science; International Practice

Implementation and Developement of CM/TM

To improve the spread and use of TM, the 72nd World Health Assembly reviewed and adopted the Eleventh Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11), which for the first time included a chapter on TM and shows more TM interventions could be applied for more health conditions and people in the world [7]. Meanwhile, more global public health disaster like COVID-19, Spain influenza and malaria need implementation of different medicines, among which CM contribute Artemisinin for control of malaria, and there are more researches evidences for influenza and COVID-19 pandemic [8,9]. However, the international application of CM/TM still faces series of challenges. Firstly, the application of CM/TM is restricted by different kinds of health policies or regulations, as well as insurance systems in different countries and regions. Although many members States of World Health Organization (WHO) have established or developed national or regional policies to promote the safe and effective use of TM [10], CM/TM still couldn't be used in routine practice and is excluded in the health systems. Secondly, for most of the practitioners of conventional medicine with different culture and medical background, the acceptance of CM/TM even with evidences still needs more time. How to remove the medical bias with more implementation strategy to improve understanding of CM/TM and choose the suitable intervention for patients is another challenge. Thirdly, although the spread of CM/TM is motivated by the public in some countries, there are still difficulties for people to accept different TM like CM. Therefore, improving the acceptance of people with different social, cultural and customs is also another challenge for CM/TM practice.

IS in Promoting Internationalization of CM/TM Practice

The internationalization of CM/TM practice is closely related to medical, social and economic issues, and IS could combine different disciplines to solve a complex problem. There have been many successful cases that proved the effectiveness of IS, and more and more researchers started to use IS methods in solving clinical practice related problems, including reducing medical fees [11], disseminating novel interventions [12], translating knowledge into practice [13], designing experimental studies [14], etc. So it may provide more effective methods in solving the challenges of the internationalization of CM/TM practice. Firstly, IS research theories and frameworks can be used to complete the background investigation, fidelity assessment, impact evaluation of CM/TM practice, which can help to in fully understand the benefits of stakeholders from different sides according to different social and cultural condition, as well as health systems, hence to improve the acceptance to CM/TM [15-17]. Secondly, combining IS research frameworks and models to find feasible and sustainable approaches of CM/TM under different health system and develop a pilot strategy to spread. By fully considering the complex medical system and implementation background of each country, IS can help in finding a suitable CM/TM interventions for practice and promotion [18]. Thirdly, the diseases with high prevalence in different countries should be investigated, especially those with evidence, CM/TM clinical practice guidelines or experts' consensus, which will increase the acceptance among medical staff and public. Besides, it calls for proper collaboration with local social workers, public managers, medical specialists, and other health related staff, to work together to find an effective way for better spread of CM/TM.

Conclusion

After years of development, CM/TM has been accepted and used by more and more countries around the world, and the demand for its services is increasing. For effective delivery of services, and developing appropriate regulations and policies to ensure the safe use of CM/TM, IS and other scientific methods are needed to develop international implementation strategy.

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