

The Significance of Constructing TCM Psychosomatic Medicine from the Holistic View of the Unity of Nature and Man

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How to cite this paper: Song, W.T. and Cao, H.X. (2023) The Significance of Constructing TCM Psychosomatic Medicine from the Holistic View of the Unity of Nature and Man. *Chinese Medicine*, 14, 267-275.

<https://doi.org/10.4236/cm.2023.144014>

Received: November 17, 2023

Accepted: December 18, 2023

Published: December 21, 2023

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Abstract

With the development of medical technology, the problem of fragmentation of medical research has become increasingly prominent, and a series of iatrogenic diseases, drug-induced diseases and drug toxicity and side effects have resulted in an increase in the number of diseases. In the face of these problems, the medical concept has been re-examined and re-thought. The concept of the holistic view of the unity of nature and man in traditional Chinese medicine has certain enlightenment for dealing with the problems in the current medical development. Based on the holistic view of the unity of nature and man, the overall connection between human's heart and body and nature is explained, and the further construction of TCM psychosomatic medicine is conducive to guiding the diagnosis and treatment of clinical diseases, and providing new enlightenment for the current medical concept thinking and clinical disease research.

Keywords

Traditional Chinese Medicine, The Unity of Nature and Man, Holistic View, TCM Psychosomatic Medicine

1. Introduction

With the development of science and technology, human's understanding of disease has been clarified to the molecular level, but it is difficult to solve the global problem of human health only from a certain direction and Angle. The research of complexity science shows that the universe, the earth, the ecosphere and the organisms in the real world are complete whole [1]. Modern ecological medicine believes that most human diseases are the result of the interaction be-

tween human body and environment [2]. If the vision of medicine focuses on the scope of the body and leads the mainstream of medicine with advanced equipment and superior technology, however, a series of medical crises will occur when iatrogenic diseases, drug-induced diseases, surgical sequelae, toxic side effects caused by low drug selectivity, disease recurrence after treatment, cancer metastasis during treatment, and poor long-term efficacy. As a result, the increasing number of people with diseases and the heavy economic burden brought by medical treatment on individuals, families, bodies and society are becoming increasingly clear. Faced with these problems, we need to re-examine and adjust the medical concept. A consensus has been reached that medical science is shifting from micro-research to holistic research [3]. Traditional Chinese medicine studies the relationship between the human body, nature and society from the general connection of the whole, and summarizes the laws of human health and disease, human physiology and pathology, and disease prevention and treatment [4]. Human being is a whole composed of heart and body. Traditional Chinese medicine not only observes that there is an integral connection between human “body” and nature, but also observes that there is an integral connection between human “heart” and nature. The holistic concept of “harmony between nature and man” in TCM can not only promote the holistic treatment of diseases, but also improve people’s ability to keep healthy and treat diseases, and better promote the harmonious coexistence between people and society, and people and nature [5]. Therefore, based on the holistic concept of the integration of nature and man, the construction of TCM psychosomatic medicine with advantages in diagnosis and treatment can bring new enlightenment to the development and research of modern medicine.

2. Holistic View of the Unity of Nature and Man

According to the theory of the unity of nature and man in Huangdi neijing, we can know that man and the universe naturally are unity. Man and nature are in the same frequency, and there is a corresponding rhythm of life movement and change. According to the “Huangdi Neijing” theory of the unity of nature and man, it can be seen that the human body is unified with the laws of nature in terms of its composition pattern, life cycle and adaptation and adjustment mechanism, and has been confirmed in many modern studies.

2.1. Composition Pattern

The Neijing regards man as a part of the whole material world, and everything in the universe is formed from its original material “qi”. In the process of the formation of the human body, it is necessary to have the combination of natural qi and get the supply of natural materials, which can gradually grow and develop and survive and multiply. Modern chemical research believes that life evolved from inanimate small molecules in heaven and earth under certain conditions and in a certain time and space. Inorganic elements in the primitive atmosphere

generate organic matter under natural discharge conditions, and the information flow in these small molecules and natural environment can be considered as “gas in heaven” [6]. The conformation of the basic materials of life, including proteins, nucleic acids and other biological macromolecules, is unified with the direction of the rotation of the planets around the sun in the solar system, which further indicates that the composition of the human body is unified with nature. The Neijing recognizes that all things in heaven and earth and human beings are the products of the intersection of Yin-Yang qi, and the activity pattern of life is formed in the movement of Yin-Yang qi. The two qi in life also have the basic properties of yin-yang movement, and their movement is coordinated with the external natural movement, forming the innate ability and conditions for life to adapt to natural changes.

2.2. Life Cycle

In the life cycle of the human body, it contains the characteristics of unity with nature. Everything in the universe is developing and changing all the time, and the process of change is inseparable from the inevitable process of being born, growing, strong, old, and death. The modern human biorhythm proves the discovery of the sages about the relationship between the universe and the human body. The concept of “growth and rejuvenation” in Neijing is the prototype of the modern concept of “life cycle” [7]. That is, in the human body, there is a biological clock that regulates the rhythm of life process. From birth to death, its physiology and psychology show periodic changes of ups and downs. At present, scholars have recognized that life cycle changes are closely related to the MT-coordinated neuroendocrine system of the body. The synthesis and secretion of MT in the pineal gland vary with age, and MT levels in middle-aged people decrease significantly compared with young people [8]. Light is an important factor affecting the synthesis of MT in the pineal gland. The secretion of MT is synchronized with the movement of sunlight through the photobiological signals of vision and skin.

2.3. Adaptation and Adjustment Mechanism

Human beings live in nature, and the natural environment provides the conditions for human survival and reproduction. On this basis, we can know that nature has constraints on man, and man has adaptability to nature. The timing of the four seasons changes, the climate alternates, forming the change of the natural environment, but also the conditions for human survival and reproduction. Human pulse is different in four seasons, mainly due to the adaptive response of human qi and blood to different climate changes in spring, summer, autumn and winter, so as to achieve coordination and unity with the natural environment. Under normal changes in natural conditions, the body’s own adaptive adjustment mechanism will not occur within the scope of action. On the contrary, when external natural conditions change beyond the normal range and exceed

the body's own regulatory mechanism to adapt, diseases may occur. According to the theory of the five Zang-organs, the physiological function of the viscera of the human body is synchronized with the seasonal changes of the four seasons in nature [9], such as "Liver corresponding spring". In autumn and winter, the function of liver qi catharsis declines, and emotional depression is easy to attack; In spring, the function of liver qi catharsis is relatively enhanced, the mood is smooth and easy to relieve, and the level and time of MT secretion in patients have significant changes [10]. After long-term evolution, organisms can survive and reproduce by constantly adapting to the time characteristics of the natural environment, and produce rhythmic physiological and behavioral responses that are alternately synchronized with the light and darkness of the external environment [11]. Most systems in the body are regulated by circadian rhythms, including sleep and arousal, hormone secretion, cell function and gene expression. The idea of prevention and health care put forward by the "Huangdi neijing", that is, people can actively adapt to nature and adapt to natural changes through self-regulation, so as to achieve the effect of health preservation and disease prevention, that is, the characteristic idea of traditional Chinese medicine "treating before the onset of disease".

3. The Whole Connection between Man's Heart and Body and Nature

Human being is a whole composed of heart and body. In the holistic view of the unity of nature and man, the "heart" and "body" of human being have extensive relations with nature, and human being maintains the overall health of heart and body in the process of adapting to natural changes. "Heart" generally refers to all spiritual, emotional and psychological factors, and also includes the function of human thinking, consciousness and wisdom. "Body" mainly refers to the five viscera system of the human body, each of which has the functions of the original viscera, and there are biochemical, restrictive and regulating relations between each other. In the state of coordination and unity of the human's "heart" and "body", adapting to natural changes and regular daily work and rest are conducive to maintaining health. If the "heart" or "body" violates the laws of nature, there will be corresponding diseases.

3.1. The Connection between the Human's "Heart" and Nature

Huangdi neijing explains that the changes of human emotions and psychology are closely related to the changes of four seasons. Modern studies have shown that the seasonal changes in nature are manifested as rhythmically secreting MT from the pineal gland, acting on melatonin receptors in the hypothalamus, and then causing rhythmically changing hormone levels related to HPA axis, and finally leading to rhythmically changing hippocampal content, showing seasonal changes in emotions [12]. Under physiological conditions, different neurotransmitter emotions have different seasonal rhythms, which is one of the theo-

retical microscopic mechanisms of “correspondence between nature and man” in traditional Chinese medicine. Previous studies have observed the impact of climate change in autumn and winter on related neurotransmitters by removing pineal gland, and found that under physiological conditions, 5-HT and GABA have seasonal rhythms, both of which are high in autumn and low in winter. NE, Glu and ACTH have a rhythm of high in winter and low in autumn [13].

Traditional Chinese medicine has a wealth of health ideas and methods to actively prevent the occurrence of diseases. The form of nature changes, birth and death, and the essence of nature does not change and die. The unity of human spirit and nature is superior to all forms of existence. The so-called “unity of nature and man”, that is, the heart is not confused by all forms and returns to its own nature, the essence of which lies in the spiritual adjustment, the adjustment of natural laws and the maintenance of healthy qi. This shows that the spirit of adjustment needs to follow the changing laws of natural growth.

Among the four qi, spring is the qi of little Yang, which corresponds to the liver in the human body. In the spring, we should comply with the laws of spring, sleep late and get up early, carry out appropriate exercise in a spacious environment, appropriately wear loose clothes to relieve the body, make qi and blood flow smoothly, and adapt to the changes of spring Yang rising. Through the adjustment of work and rest, the adjustment of sports and the cooperation of clothing, etc., the emotions in people’s hearts can be gradually expressed, and the mental state of being open-minded, happy, relaxed and positive can be achieved. In summer, plants and trees flourish, and the growth of Yang in nature gradually reaches exuberance. In the four seasons, summer qi belongs to the old Yang qi, corresponding to the heart in the human body. At this time, human life activities also need to comply with the characteristics of summer’s Yang qi. During the summer heat, it is easy to experience restlessness, irritability, and other negative emotions. Therefore, in the process of conforming to the summer qi, it is necessary to pay attention to keeping a calm mind, spiritual tranquility, and achieve the role of maintaining the heart qi and protecting the heart Yang. In autumn, the Yang between heaven and earth gradually closes and the Yin qi gradually grows. In the process of conforming to autumn qi, the human body needs to converge and adhere to it. In life, so that they are not troubled by fame and wealth, not persistent for gains and losses, that is, to maintain an optimistic and cheerful, quiet state of mind, which is conducive to maintaining the function of visceral lung qi, and help the body to achieve the process of gradual convergence of Yang qi. In the winter, the human life activities should also converge and not rashly move, such as with lofty aspirations, silently full of hope, not proud of talent, avoid wasting spirit, maintain peace of mind. Winter is characterized by Yin qi flourishing and Yang qi hidden, the movement of the human body Yang in a day also changes, at this time should go to bed early and get up late, regular work and rest is conducive to mental stability, consciousness hiding, not to carry out too much labor and activities, through sufficient rest and rest to ensure the peace of the spirit. In study and work, the combination of work and

rest, relaxation, reduce excessive thinking and trouble. At the same time, it is also necessary to clear the heart and desire less, to avoid affecting the quiet mind because of the indulgence of greed.

3.2. The Connection between the Human's "Body" and Nature

In the overall connection between human's "body" and nature, the Huangdi Neijing points out that time and space, are the environment for life operation [14] and become natural factors affecting the human body. Through the regulation of the five viscera system, the body function changes in accordance with the laws of nature. When the natural changes are abnormal, the four seasons rule is disarranged, it will disturb the coordination of the five viscera system of the human body, resulting in the occurrence of diseases, and there is a seasonal attack or aggravation phenomenon. Each season's climate has different characteristics, so in addition to general diseases, there are some seasonal diseases. In addition, some chronic diseases often occur or increase with seasonal changes and solar terms exchange. At present, studies have explored the concept of the five viscera through the different changes of cytokines related to the signal transduction system in winter and summer [15], so as to show that the five viscera are functional units based on solid organs, and their changes correspond to the natural four-season changes.

With the ebb and flow of Yin and Yang throughout the day, people's metabolism also changes accordingly. Although the range of day-night temperature changes is not as obvious as the four seasons, it still has a certain impact on the human body. Modern biological clock studies suggest that the human body adjusts the level of melatonin secreted by the pineal gland according to light-dark cycle signals in the environment to promote sleep [16]. Relevant studies have found that the production of 5-HT in blood is related to the time of light in a day, which can provide an additional mechanism to control the external environment nutrient absorption and digestive function [17]. The circadian secretion rhythm of 5-HT can be used as an additional blood biochemical signal indicating the state of nutrient absorption [18].

From the perspective of Traditional Chinese medicine, because the Yang of the human body has a circadian cycle change, it also has a direct impact on the pathological changes of the human body. According to this theory, people can use the daily rhythm of Yang to arrange work and study, and exert human wisdom and potential in order to achieve the best results. At the same time, it can also guide human's daily living arrangements, improve the human body's ability to adapt to the natural environment, and make it serve human health. Traditional Chinese medicine advocates "on the treatment of disease", that is, the combination of human and nature health methods. Traditional diet health refers to the study of the nature of food under the guidance of traditional medical theory, the use of diet to achieve the purpose of nutrition, maintain or promote health, prevention and treatment of diseases, with special emphasis on the unity of nature and man and the view of regulating Yin and Yang. The diet of the hu-

man body should be adapted to its natural environment.

4. Conclusions

In recent years, domestic scholars have pointed out that the fragmentation of medical research and the one-sided knowledge of medical personnel have led to the deviation of doctors' diagnosis and treatment, and even caused some adverse consequences. In today's society with the rapid development of science and technology, the reason why such a situation occurs in modern medical treatment is mainly due to the subjective and one-sided medical treatment, the lack of a correct understanding of the unity of man and nature and the unity of man's heart and body. In the application, the subjective knowledge represents the objective knowledge, and the partial judgment replaces the overall change. Therefore, due to incomplete cognition and one-sided cognition in clinical practice, many problems in medical treatment have arisen. Based on this situation, this paper proposes the construction of TCM psychosomatic medicine from the holistic view of the unity of nature and human. This discipline is not the establishment of a new theory, which is contained in the traditional Chinese medicine system and develops with the enrichment and development of Chinese medicine. Although TCM psychosomatic medicine is contained in TCM, it is now constructed and put forward in order to further explore the essence of TCM's holistic concept of the unity of nature and human, and explain the holistic connection between human heart-body and natural existence, so as to provide new enlightenment for current medical concepts and clinical research.

The content of TCM heart-body medicine not only covers the content of the unity of human's heart and body, but also covers the content of the unity of human and nature, which not only defines the change of human's heart and body, but also includes the interaction of human's heart and body in nature. People come out of nature, and with the development of civilization and the evolution of civilization, they will gradually lose the original simplicity of nature. Just as in the process of learning, mastering and practicing the theory of traditional Chinese medicine, people are often limited by their own subjective thoughts, and even can not really grasp its essence. In view of the gradual change of thought in the evolution of civilization and society, it is necessary to have a holistic view of the unity of nature and man through learning. Based on the holistic view of the unity of nature and man, TCM psychosomatic medicine is proposed as a discipline in order to differentiate the essence of TCM from its original system, which is more targeted and more applicable to the difficulties and problems in current medical development, diagnosis and treatment, and research.

Acknowledgements

In the course of this research, we got help from the funding department. They provided financial support for the study. We hereby express our heartfelt thanks to them.

Funding

Scientific Research Project Funded by the Institute of Basic Theory of Traditional Chinese Medicine, China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences (No.YZ-202154).

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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