

Integrative Medicine: Students' Perspective on the Future of Modern Healthcare

By Sarah Nargiso and Misty Rogers

Despite increasing public interest in "integrative medicine," the majority of patient facilities fall short on providing comprehensive services. Integrative medicine isn't simply allopathic care. Integrative medicine is ideally used to promote practices that provide complete patient care in healing and wellness.

A true model of integrative care is the Roy and Patricia Disney Cancer Center at Providence St. Joseph's in Burbank, California. "Committed to Healing Body, Mind, & Spirit" is engraved into the walls of the facility, and every policy is created from that goal. Today, it is a pioneer in the creation of integrative medicine by blending technology and the healing arts. Their services include the best in conventional cancer therapy—integrating acupuncture, Tai Chi, yoga, and meditation. They are one of a few shining examples of true modern integrative healthcare.

As senior interns at Emperor's College, we have been fortunate to spend the past ten weeks in the Acupuncture Department at the Disney Center. Under the supervision of Dr. Robert Chu L.Ac., and working alongside radiation oncologist Dr. Lisa Schwartz MD, we treat patients currently receiving conventional care for cancer or recovering from cancer-related therapies. This experience is a priceless enhancement to our education as we prepare to enter the modern world of medicine.

As a model for integration, patient files are electronic and shared amongst all departments of the hospital. Not only can we view a complete history and track our patients progression in care, but other departments are able to see documented improvements their patients are making with acupuncture treatment. This mutual exchange of information develops a productive relationship between Eastern and Western modalities, reinforcing our high quality of care.

A typical shift at the Disney Center begins with a collaborative meeting with Dr. Schwartz to discuss current medical research, cancer prevention, therapy, recovery, and how traditional Chinese medicine fits into the course of treatment.



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Evidence supports that acupuncture is able to combat the harsh side effects of cancer therapy including: pain, nausea, hot flashes, fatigue, neutropenia, and xerostomia. As TCM's philosophy is illness prevention, our healing modality has much to offer through patient education about lifestyle modifications that are proven to enhance overall health, prevent cancer, aid recovery and reduce relapse. We discuss and personalize approaches to nutrition, exercise and stress management with our patients to raise their consciousness and guide them back to their vitality.

Under the supervision of Dr. Chu, we have had the rare opportunity to receive one-on-one tutorials of true Master Tung style acupuncture, and treatment principles derived solely from classical texts of Chinese Medicine. The simple elegance and effectiveness of this approach never ceases to amaze our patients, as the use

of one acupoint can greatly diminish their pain and symptoms. The use of Master Tung's Xin Ling point caused a skeptical new patient to say "You have just made me a believer," as her radiation and surgically-induced pain and stiffness subsided within seconds after insertion.

Working at the Disney Center with Dr. Schwartz and Dr. Chu in a synergistic setting has taught us what integrative medicine should look like. We understand the importance of establishing constructive relationships with our Western partners to create an alliance which provides the safest, most comprehensive and most effective care for our patients' body, mind and spirit.

Sarah Nargiso and Misty Rogers are senior level interns at Emperors College. Both are completing an externship at the Disney Cancer Center and are excited about the future of medicine.