

The attitude and acceptance of TCM in Western country

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Part one. Past situation

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), with a long history, can be dated back to 22century B.C or even much earlier. For the Chinese culture, TCM is irreplaceable. It has a well developed theory framework and played a unique role in the prosperity of Chinese nation.

It had been spread to Japan, North Korea, India, Vietnam, and some Arabic countries as early as the fifth or sixth century. Then, before the eleventh century, it spreads to a much wider region including the Europe. And as Chinese people emigrated further far away from China,TCM has existed in more and more countries and regions. Today, almost every region around the world has some TCM practitioners there.

Part two. Present situation

According to statistics, with over 100 000 acupuncturists and over 20000 registered TCM practitioners working around the world, more than 50 000 institutions and clinics provide TCM services(including acupuncture) in 160 countries and regions. It is interesting that many TCM medical services providers just provide acupuncture service. In America, about 4% of the patients take TCM and over 1 million people get acupuncture treatment each year. There are over 20% of Canadians and more than 2.8 million Australians receive acupuncture treatment every year. In

Britain, 2.5 million people tend to choose traditional medical services per year such as Chinese herbal medicine, massage, acupuncture, etc; 70% of Austrians accept TCM medical services; about 15% of Dutchmen take acupuncture therapy; there are about 2600 TCM clinics in France in which nearly ten thousand acupuncturists use Chinese herbal medicine, acupuncture and Tuina to treat patients, consuming about 35 000 tons of Chinese herbal medicine a year[1].

It seems TCM developed extremely well around the world from the statistics above. But unfortunately it's not. The author has identified four types of governmental administration: integrative services, supplementary services, unregulated services and evolving services.

Integrative services are the services which combined TCM with local medicine. What's more, TCM has been legalized. The government of Thailand, Vietnam, Quebec of Canada, and Victoria of Australia, whether national or provincial, review market entry qualification and maintain the registration for the business and trade in TCM.

Supplementary services means, in regions like America, Britain, Germany, France, Austria, Finland, Czech, Denmark, Peru, Sudan, and Congo. , TCM is regarded as a complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). For example, the development of TCM in the state of California has been described as "two parts hot but one part cold" from a service in 2007. Physicians and patients have accepted TCM, but the western medical world and the insurance industry always look down upon it.[2]

Unregulated services are the most chaotic scenario. There are no laws or

regulations to definitely stipulate whether TCM is allowed to be practiced. In India, Sri Lanka and some countries in Africa and South America, TCM medical services exist and thrive on anarchy. [1]

Evolving services are the greatest situation as far as I can see. TCM has evolved and been reborn as a completely local medicine. Traditional Korean Medicine and Kampomedical-indigenous medicine in Japan are all developed from TCM.

In order to understand more clearly about the position of TCM in the global market, the author adopted the marketing theory proposed by Philip Kotler. According to the competitive status of hospitals in the market, four kinds of competitors can be identified: market leader, market challenger, market follower and market stopgap [1]. The leaders usually are regional medical entity. This group has the biggest market share. The challengers refer to a medical entity that has the greatest potential to increase its influence in the market. And the followers are content with their status quo. These medical institutions like to maintain its share. The last group, the market stopgap, is a small medical institution providing medical services in the area that market leader and challenger do not or less involved.

We can get two conclusions from the thesis. TCM belongs to CAM, and TCM refers to the group of market stopgap.

Part three. What to do next?

So, as a CAM, the author suggests that TCM medical entities should try to provide high-quality, safe and effective services. And because of the low costs of TCM

compare with Western medical services, TCM medical services really have the potential to generate profits.

Market stopgap needs a strategy for its development. Moreover, according to the survey, most of the respondents agreed that a strategy for global market expansion of TCM medical services should be built for market stopgap [1]. So how can we achieve the rise of TCM with the position of a market stopgap? The market for the stopgap is relatively small, so compared with the market management or something like this, the need of providing services with a high-quality is much more serious and profound. What's more, the author has pointed out that many patients turn to private medical institutions instead of the national public medical system today because of the low efficiency and less convenient services that provided by the nations. This is really a chance that TCM practitioners can't afford to miss. Therefore, TCM medical services entities should seize the chance to expand their market share by providing suitable services with reasonable and competitive prices [1].

After reading this thesis, I was shocked and depressed by the reality. I thought TCM was extremely hot around the world. Although it may be struck by some unfair competition disadvantages, it should be a market challenger at least. Unfortunately, facts speak louder than words, in the global medical services market, the cake we share is really small. The financial market is cruelty but full of chances. So TCM can have a really bright prospect with a proper strategy. As the author mentioned, we are not lacking of potential market.

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