



Podcast Transcript:

Dr. Ron Falk & Dr. Wunian Chen

Healing Through Acupuncture

“How should Western doctors and Chinese doctors communicate with each other?”

Dr Falk So I'm a typical Western doctor—I have been trained in all of the usual sorts of Western kinds of thinking. What do you think would be the best way for people who are trained in this Chinese medical approach, especially acupuncture, how do you think there should be a better communication between people who what you do and people like me who do more Western-like care?

Dr Chen I think they should have more close communication between the two medical practitioners. For me, I like to know the patient's Western diagnosis. I need to know that so I know more about the stages of their disease, that will help me. Also when I give the treatment, I like the patient's doctor to know the result of the treatment.

I think that the medical doctor should take the lead in this kind of integrative care.

Dr Falk So, what you're hoping for is that the Western doctor would communicate with the Chinese medical doctor, and say that “I have a patient who has vasculitis who has pain in a nerve. Can you help with acupuncture?”

Of course what I would want to see happen is for you to then tell me after a certain number of sessions, “No this did not work, but we tried” or “Yes it did work, and what do you think about the progress?”

It seems like we should all have much better communications than we typically have.

So Dianne, what were you worried about with not telling your doctors that you had received acupuncture?

Dianne I was worried that they would tell me that I shouldn't do it. That they would laugh at me, that they would think I was a bad patient. So I didn't tell you, I didn't tell my ENT at the time.

But I felt like I was doing something that was scientifically based, I didn't feel like I was going off the deep end.

Dr Falk Do you think that's true for most patients? They don't want to tell Western doctors of the complementary kinds of therapies that they're doing?

Dianne I think that's true. I think that it's starting to change. I think as people move from understanding it from "alternative" medicine—ie, you don't take Western medicine, you do other medicine, to complementary medicine, where you take your Western medicine AND you do these other practices, that things will open up.

Dr Chen Here's my experience. In most cases so far, I find that Chinese medicine will help the Western medicine. We should have education for the general medical doctors. It's really incredible.

Dr Falk So I've been a doctor treating these kinds of diseases for over a quarter of a century. Now that I've matured out some, it's very clear that our current medications do not necessarily help quality of life. I think the whole concept of the word choice of Eastern versus Western medicine, and then "alternative" medicine, and then the word choice of "complementary medicine", is a good thought process, so that patients can actually tell us, "Hey listen I did acupuncture and it was great. You ought to try it."

Patient The words to describe all this, a new word has emerged, it's now "integrative medicine" so you really are pulling the traditions together.



UNC
KIDNEY CENTER