

Phenomenal Studies of Tai Chi Chuan, Tui Na and Thai Massage

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Abstract

Tai chi chuan is a internal Chinese martial art practice for both its defense training and health benefits which involves series of postures and movements. It also enhances serenity and clarity and brings calmness of mind. There are many different styles of tai chi each having its own importance on various tai chi methods and principle. It incorporates Chinese concept of opposing force "yin and yang" within the body. Many people find tai chi pleasing because it is inexpensive and it can be done indoor as well as outdoor.

Tuina (pronounced as twee naw), which literally means "pinch and pull". It is a hand-on body Chinese practice which uses Chinese Taoist principle. It involves various strokes, shaking stretching and joint movement along with energy channels to balance the body's energy, as well as physical and emotional system.

Thai massage is a healing practice which involves deep massage and stretching on the body. Thai massage influences from combinations of cultures such as Chinese, Indian and Southeast Asian. It is a remedial method that provides relaxation and restores healthy blood circulation. Thai massage differs from traditional massage by its use of body line system, known as senlines.

Key Words: Ying and yang, acupuncture, traditional Chinese medicine, acupressure, Sen lines.

Introduction

Tai chi chuan

Tai chi is one of the internal style of Chinese martial art, means supreme boxing, the root of all motions and optimal fist fighting[1]. Tai chi is a slow motion moving meditative form for self defense, relaxation and health. It is practice for a variety of reasons most commonly as a stress reducer and for health benefits.

There are five principal styles of tai chi through which dozens of new styles developed from them i.e. Chen, Yang, Wu, Sun and Hao. Yang and Wu being the most popular style Because there are so many

variations, more than hundred possible positions and movements have been developed, all practiced with rhythmic patterns of movement that are coordinated with breathing. It mainly involves three aspects- Martial Arts, Meditation and movements consist of gentle exercise and stretching performed in a slow, graceful manner[2]. Medical studies of tai-chi support its effectiveness as an alternative exercise and a form of martial arts therapy[6].

The body is in a constant motion as each posture moves from one step to next. Each movement is coordinated with breathing

thus promoting an inner sense of calm during the practice. Various recent scientific studies have suggested that tai chi offers several health benefits: improved sleep quality, improved cardiovascular fitness, relief of chronic pain, improved internal circulation, lowered blood pressure and overall feelings of well-being. It is also related with improved muscle strength, improved balance, reduction of falls in order adults, coordination and flexibility, pain and stiffness relief and increased energy, agility and endurance[6].

Tuina

The term tuina which means pinch and pull, refers to a wide range of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) therapeutic massage and body work. Tuina is not generally used for pleasure and relaxation, but rather as a treatment to specific patterns of disharmony. Tuina is the oldest known system of massage and physical therapy in the world, It is traced back to the Shang Dynasty of ancient China(1700 B.C.E.)[3].

Traditional Chinese massage(TCM) uses tuina to synchronize yin and yang in the body by manipulating the Qi in the acupuncture channels. It provides all the benefits of traditional western massage such as enhanced circulation, respiration and digestion. It also works well for specific health concerns. It is particularly effective for chronic pain in muscles, joints, and skeletal system working well for arthritis, sciatica, and muscle spasms. It can also improve chronic conditions such as insomnia, constipation, and migraines[4.] By improving and restoring the flow of energy in the body, It enhances the self-

healing and creates a sense of general wellbeing both physically as well as mentally.

Thai massage

Traditional Thai Massage took long history of therapeutic healing. If one discovers the healing-massage practice techniques evolution in Thailand, another discovers the surprising facts that the earliest roots of Thai massage lie not in Thailand but in India. The legendary originator of the art is believed to have been a physician from northern India known as Jivaka Kumar Bhaccha, he was a contemporary of the Buddha and personal practitioner of the Magadha King Bimbisara over 2,500 years ago[5].

Thai Massage uses a variety of yoga like stretching positions that is believed to cause therapeutic effect. Thai massage is based on principle of energy balance through the body. The basic principle of Thai Massage is to start working from the extremities of the body and work towards the core of the body, and then back to the extremities. This ensure the flow of energy through the energy channels called meridians and also helps improves blood circulation throughout the body[2].

It is a healing procedure that provides relaxation and restores healthy blood circulation. It also treats energy blockages, dysfunctional organs, aches, pains, stress, flexibility, paralysis, nerve problems and postural alignments. It is differ from traditional massage by its use of body's energy line system known as Sen lines. There is a basic theory that there are 72 thousand Sen lines that are also called energy lines[7].



Fig 1: Thai massage practice

Benefits on health

Tai chi chuan:

Various studies show that it provides major health benefits, especially for the elderly. A sampling of recent evidence.

Fall prevention. When the elderly people fall hip fracture is a major risk one that is possibly life-threatening. After the year 25 percent of people die due to hip fracture. Among those who survive, only one-third of them regain their independence. Tai chi improves balance and helps to prevent falls [8].

General health and fitness. Tai chi is delicate practice however it enhances wellness, particularly in the elderly. Korean specialists enlisted 23 nursing home inhabitants in a 12-week yoga program. Before its finish it is compared with a control group that did not participate in the tai chi program, those who did showed significantly improved balance and flexibility, better physical function, and improved general health. The study was

done in Hong Kong shows that tai chi also improves muscle strength and stamina.

Parkinson's disease. Parkinson's impairs mobility, Researchers at Washington University in St. Louis recruited 17 people suffering with Parkinson's in a 20-hour tai chi training program over 12 weeks. Afterward compared with untrained controls, the tai chi group showed significantly improved balance and the ability to stand up and walk backward [9].

Stoarthritis. Many elderly people and quite a few younger folks suffer stiff, sore, painful arthritis of the knee. Korean scientists recruited 46 people having average age 75, for a tai chi class that met two hours a week for 12 weeks. At the class's conclusion, the result compared with a control group who did not learn tai chi, those who did reported less knee pain, stiffness and disability, and improved balance and knee mobility [10].

Blood Pressure. Harvard researchers reviewed 26 studies of tai chi's effects on

blood pressure, a key risk factor for heart disease and stroke and 22 of them (85 percent) showed that tai chi lowers blood pressure significantly.

Heart disease. Researchers in Taiwan report that tai chi reduce blood pressure as well as tai chi also lowers cholesterol, improves heart and arterial function and speeds healing in post-heart-attack and post-bypass rehabilitation.

Sleep. Tai chi chaun exercise also improves sleep quality but many elderly people have difficulty exercising. UCLA (University of California, los Angeles) researchers acknowledged 112 people, age 59 to 86, and enrolled some in a tai chi program while the rest took a health-education class. After 25 weeks, people who performed tai chi reported with fewer sleep problems and better sleep quality.

Depression. Exercise enhance mood of the patient. Researchers of Hong Kong taught tai chi to outpatients at a psychiatric clinic who were being treated for depression. After 36 tai chi sessions, compared with controls who did not learn tai chi, those who did showed fewer depressive symptoms [11].

Tuina :

This method include soft tissue massage, manipulation, acupressure in conjunction with herbal compresses, ointments, liniments, and heat. The finest part of the therapy is that it relaxes as well as energizes the person. The key advantage of tuina massage is that it focuses on the specific problem, whether it is an acute or a chronic pain associated with the joints, muscles or a skeletal system.

It is a very effective therapy for pain, arthritis, sciatica and muscle spasms. Other benefits of this massage therapy include alleviation of the stress related disorders like insomnia, constipation, headaches and other disorders related to digestive, respiratory and reproductive systems [12].

The Effect on Skin Tissues. The skin, whose function is to regulate body temperature and protect the various structures beneath it from trauma, is the area of the body that directly accepts tuina treatment. Tuina manipulations can promote secretion of sebaceous and sweat glands, remove necrotic epithelial cells, improve skin metabolism, soften scars, and increase the defensive ability of the skin. At the same time, they enhance the shininess and elasticity of the skin and delay its aging process. Rubbing, kneading, scrubbing and patting-striking are able to dilate capillaries and increase skin temperature.

The Effect on Muscles. After intense exercise, a lot of lactic acid, an intermediate metabolic product, is produced and deposited in muscles, leading to cramps, pain and fatigue. Tuina can be used to treat muscle fatigue, improve the metabolism of lactic acid, and alleviate the pain. Therefore, athletes often accept preventive tuina to eliminate fatigue so as to quickly be in sportsman mode prior to competitions.

Enhancing the Recovery of Joint Injuries. When the joints of the bone are injured, the local circulation of blood and lymphatic fluid slows down due to inactivity of the affected muscles and joints. Appropriate tuina treatment speeds up the

blood and lymphatic circulation to reduce swelling, relax adherence, and improve the range of motion of dysfunctional joints gradually to or close to its normal level [12].

Improving Blood Circulation. Some workers in a dye chemical factory had fatigue and decreased total blood indices because of exposure to poisonous chemical substances. After tuina treatment, such as pressing and kneading the Four-Gate Points and , and pinching along the spine, the total blood picture among the workers improved considerably. Studies showed that tuina can significantly increase the number of capillary vessels and blood circulation, promote the rebuilding of the vascular network of tissue lesions, recover elasticity of vessel walls, improve the transporting function of vessels, and decrease peripheral resistance of blood circulation

Promoting Digestion. Some experiments have shown that stomach peristalsis could be increased by performing tuina for one to two minutes. It is worth mentioning that tuina regulates the digestive system in both ways: stimulating and inhibiting. Other experiments proved that tuina reduces the secretion of gastrin and increases the absorptive function of the small intestine. Consequently, it has great treatment effect on digestive dysfunctions [12].

Improving Mood. Gentle and soft manipulations can help patients to relax, calm down, or reduce negative psychological reactions to diseases, as well as alleviate depression and anxiety. Along with the accumulative effect of the treatment, the confidence of the patients can gradually increase to actively cooperating

with the treatment. Therefore, tuina is an effective therapy for not only organic disorders, but also psychological imbalances [13].

Thai massage :

Thai massage therapy has been shown beneficial effects on varies conditions including prenatal depression, preterm infants, full-term infants, autism, skin conditions, pain syndromes including arthritis and fibromyalgia, hypertension, autoimmune conditions including asthma and multiple sclerosis, immune conditions including HIV and breast cancer and aging problems including Parkinson's and dementia.

Relaxes Muscles and relieves pain. The combination of stretching action and gentle massage relaxes as well as lengthens tight muscles. It also reduces the stiffness or knots in muscle that cause pain [14].

Increases muscle flexibility. In yoga, the stretching action stretches the muscle, this helps to improve the muscle tone and flexibility.

Improves joint motions. The stretching action of thai massage improves the movement of fluids such as lymph, synovial and cerebrospinal in the space between joints which improve the joints movements.

Improves blood circulation. The massage improves the blood circulation all over the body. Massage helps in circulation because the pressure produced by the massage technique moves blood through the congested areas. The release of the pressure causes blood to flow in. The squeezing and pulling also flushes lactic acid from the muscles and improves the circulation of the lymph fluid which carries metabolic waste away from muscles and internal organs[14].

Relieves musculoskeletal pain. Tight muscles can put pressure on the joints and cause musculoskeletal pain, for example back pain or shoulder pain. It releases the pressure on joints and allow them to fall back into proper alignment and relieving the pain.

Improves immunity. When blood circulation improves with the help of thai massage which helps to remove the toxins from the body. This increases immunity against diseases [15].

Reduces fatigue. Thai Massage and stretching practice can efficiently reduce the soreness of body and fatigue.

Assists with Sleep Problems. It alleviates the disturb sleep pattern and massage to sleep better by naturally soothing to the mind and body.

Discussion:

Tai Chi is a Chinese traditional exercise that included breathing exercise into body movements. This paper give out the idea of Tai Chi benefits on health promotion and has various potential role as an alternative therapy in neurological, rheumatological,

orthopedic, and cardiopulmonary diseases. There are several reasons to recommend Tai Chi as an exercise program for healthy people and patients with chronic diseases. Firstly Tai Chi does not need special facility or expensive equipment because it can be practiced anytime and anywhere. Secondly Tai Chi is effective in enhancing aerobic capacity, muscular strength, and balance and in improving cardiovascular risk factors. Third, Tai Chi is a low-cost, low-technology exercise, and it can be easily implemented in the community. It is concluded that Tai Chi is effective in promoting health, and it can be prescribed as an alternative exercise program for patients with certain chronic diseases.

Tuina is also part of TCM It is used widely to treat various diseases, including not only musculoskeletal disorders, but also diseases of internal organs. It is a hands-on body treatment. Practitioners uses brush, knead, roll, press, and rub the areas between each of the joints, known as the eight gates, in try to attempt body's defensive its open the flow energy moving in the meridians and the muscles. This therapy is a manipulative therapy used in conjunction with acupuncture, moxibustion, fire cupping, Chinese herbalism, tai chi, and qigong.

Thai massage is an earliest healing method that combines broad and targeted acupressure, stimulation and manipulation of energy lines. It include rubbing on muscles, the body is compressed, pulled, stretched and rocked in order to clear energy blockages and relieve tension. In this process the energy is balanced and joints are opened, muscles and tendons are stretched,

internal organs are toned. Thus, the overall effect is deep relaxation, rejuvenation, and physical and mental well being.

The result of a Thai massage treatment is often an exciting and powerful mind and body healing experience, bringing both the recipient and the practitioner to heightened states of physical and spiritual well-being.

Conclusion

Tai chi chuan and tuina are Chinese born practices and thai massage originally originated from India and it includes yoga, acupuncture and ayurvedic system. Various trials were performed and various systemic reviews were published to prove that this practice are beneficial for body and mental health.

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