

TCM Clinical Training
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Zhong Yi Praxis für Traditionelle Chinesische Medizin
Basel, Switzerland

Supervisor: Mr. K.Y. Toh

Training hours: 130 hours from October 2022 - January 2023

TCM School: Heilpraktikerschule Luzern

What I've learned at Zhong Yi Praxis

I've learned so much during my short period of training, so it is difficult to reduce everything to a few points. I was reaching the end of my studies and approaching exams, so my head was full of theoretical information, but it was refreshing to see the theories put into practice. However, one of the most valuable lessons I learned was that the theories are just a framework, but a treatment often requires thinking outside of the box, being flexible, relying on experience, and meeting each patient as they come.

Many of our modern illnesses can still be described in the patterns that have been developed over thousands of years in the Chinese Medicine tradition but providing patients relief from their symptoms doesn't only require a deep knowledge of TCM theory. It also requires the TCM practitioner to provide the time and opportunity for the patient to relax their *shen* (or 'spirit') and assist the patients in finding tools and strategies for them to carry that calmness out into their daily lives. This already goes a long way to promote a person's health. Along with crafting a good diagnosis and treatment plan, I was able to see the results that came with creating enough time for acupressure, *tuina* massage, the application of specific acupuncture points, and exercises the patients can take with them to relax their mind and bodies at home.

Something that I experienced over this phase of learning for the first time in my encounters with acupuncture was an emphasis on doing a treatment on both the front side and the back of the body in one single appointment. I had previously learned the importance of the back *shu* points in theory, but it was very new for me to see so many patients who were being consistently treated on the back and then turned over to be treated on the front - or vice versa. This would more likely be done in two different treatments in what I had previously observed in the U.S. and Switzerland. I believe this also has to do with the amount of time and attention the patients received in the clinic, and I was impressed how you could often see the significance of this in the deep relaxation with which the patients left their appointment.

What I will take with me

I am very appreciative of the technical skills that I have acquired that will help me in my future clinical work. From the very beginning, I was able to practice fire cupping and I began to really welcome including it in treatments. I had learned fire cupping in school, but we had only practiced it one time during a course, and I wouldn't have had the confidence to begin using it on my own without the routine I developed at Zhong Yi Praxis.

It was also valuable to get a good glimpse into the routine of everyday work. This is something I think every individual must experience for themselves to build their own habits after coming out of their TCM studies, but it was a pleasure to see how Mr. Toh works with his patients. I respect the level of commitment and care to his rapport with each individual and I hope I can carry some of those lessons with me into my daily work.

I knew that a lot of the rich history and context of TCM was missing from what I studied in school, so it was advantageous to observe someone who has spent time in China to further develop his skills and who is able to read Chinese, giving him access to the classical texts that I haven't yet studied in depth. I already assumed this was the case, but Mr. Toh's enthusiasm that this will enrich my TCM knowledge has also additionally sparked my curiosity.

How I will remember this clinical training

I have a very positive memory of my clinical hours. It brought a lot of motivation to my studies to see the applications of techniques that I learned in school and the things that I would still like to learn. It could have been easy to focus on all the skills I haven't mastered, but I will remember being encouraged to deepen my knowledge and learn new techniques in a constructive manner that only made me feel more eager to learn and dig deeper.

I'm curious how my skills will advance, but I am certain that my time at Zhong Yi Praxis played an important role in my development.

If someone is looking for practical training, would I recommend this opportunity?

Definitely! I think Mr. Toh is a highly competent practitioner and was a very helpful supervisor. As someone who was coming directly from TCM school with very little real-world experience in the clinic, I was very thankful to have the opportunity to observe his work. He was very patient and willing to help me on my clinical journey, allowing me whenever possible to assist in treatments, learn new techniques, and generously sharing his insights with me or encouraging me to ask my own questions. You're directly incorporated into the treatments as an assistant and given the chance to develop new skills or practice things you've already learned. If someone is interested in broadening their knowledge beyond the version of TCM you learned in the Swiss TCM curriculum, I would also highly recommend assisting at Zhong Yi. For others who have already completed their studies and are further along in their practice of TCM, I can imagine it would be just as enriching... if not, even more! There are so many topics and methods I would still like to dig deeper into, but I first need get through my final exams.