

## Strong and Steady for the New Year

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Happy New Year! This cycle begins the Year of the Ox. Those born under this sign are patient, work hard and show great amounts of fortitude, just as their animal namesake implies. Let's all emulate the ox and remind ourselves to be strong and steady for the good of our patients and the profession. This medicine is growing and progressing for the benefit of the citizens of the United States and the global health care system.

Last year, the American Public Health Association conference in San Diego emphasized health and wellness. Recently, I had the privilege of attending the American Academy of Anti-Aging conference in Las Vegas. There were 6,000 MD attendees and about 90 licensed acupuncturists. This was the first time that complementary medicine providers were included in this conference.

Based on the APHA conference and the anti-aging conference, some medical doctors are looking to shift the focus of their practices toward anti-aging medicine. The baby boomers are the main demographic group responsible for the growing interest in anti-aging. They are also the predominate number of patients treated by Oriental medicine practitioners. This might indicate that MDs and complementary medicine providers are actually focusing on the same group of potential patients.

This conference included general sessions, smaller classes, an extremely large vendor hall and many breakout groups. The acupuncture classes were attended by some MDs, and many others came to ask questions. The questions from the MDs ranged from education questions to which conditions are treatable by Oriental medicine.

Where and how does Oriental medicine integrate into anti-aging? Just as complementary medicine uses different terms to express conditions and treatments, OM professes wellness in place of anti-aging and purification instead of detoxification.

There were 600 vendors in the exhibit hall showing and explaining numerous products, drugs and devices designed to stop or slow down the aging process. The aging population wants health, youth, beauty, vitality, energy, long life and fitness, as the vendors clearly understood. These are also some of the benefits of acupuncture care.

What does this mean to the acupuncture profession? Acupuncturists who provide anti-aging services for their clients can offer a whole range of products and services, such as:

- Easing stress and tension
- Programs specifically for seniors
- Specific herbal formulas for retaining youthfulness
- Individually customized nutritional capsules
- Managing migraine and headaches
- Controlling pain and inflammation
- Adult fitness and yoga
- Educational programs

- Controlling dizziness
- Healthy cooking classes
- Specialty acupuncture, such as orthopedics
- Smoking cessation
- Improving core strength
- Sports medicine services

Think of this as a baby boomer wish list for health, vitality and wellness. Make no mistake - the baby boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) are here to stay for a good long while. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of older people will increase dramatically from 2010 to 2030. The older population in 2030 is projected to be twice as large as in 2000, growing from 35 million to 71.5 million and representing nearly 20 percent of the total U.S. population. So if you can offer these wish-list services, it may be a boost to your practice.

Acupuncturists at the anti-aging conference learned about the various ways to fulfill this wish list as they listened to various speakers, including Dr. John Chen speaking on youth and anti-aging herbal formulas. Dr. Richard Tan spoke on anti-aging techniques. Massage therapist Rita Woods spoke on bodywork therapies that enhance the regenerative process. Dr. Kenneth Chao talked about acupuncture treatments. Denise Ellenger, LAc, spoke about cosmetic acupuncture. Dr. John Hinwood spoke on building a successful anti-aging/regenerative focused office.

Now is the time to begin thinking and moving toward multidisciplinary collaboration and integration. This can mean a wider range of patient care. Now is the time to spread the word about the healthy benefits of acupuncture. Be strong and be steady, and you are sure to get ahead this year.

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