

News in Brief

Editorial Staff

Alternative Medicine Comes to the Persian Gulf

Ajman University of Science and Technology, one of the most prestigious institutions of higher learning in the United Arab Emirates, has opened an alternative medicine center in Jirff. The center, constructed under the patronage of Sheikh Humaid bin Rashid Al Nuaimi, the ruler of Ajman, and Dr. Saeed Abdullah Salman, the university's president, will offer short educational courses on ayurveda, acupressure, acupuncture and Chinese medicine, and will also conduct studies on herbal products from around the world.

"The center has been opened to meet the increasing demand for herbal medication," enthused Dr. Fowzi Qutub, the director of the new facility. Qutub added that alternative forms of care such as acupressure and acupuncture "are of great benefit to mankind, as they come without any side-effects."

Research and education will be two main components of the new center, with plans to conduct research programs comparing conventional and alternative treatments for various diseases. Students from the university's pharmacy and health sciences faculties will be trained at the center by an international team of alternative medicine experts; graduate doctors and pharmacists are also welcome to attend courses.

Herbal Medicine Effective against Allergic Rhinitis

Scientists at the Kinki University School of Medicine in Osaka, Japan have found a new use for a centuries-old Japanese herbal remedy. The remedy, *sho seriyu to*, has been shown to improve the symptoms of allergic rhinitis, a condition that causes the nasal passages to become inflamed.

A research team led by Dr. Shigenori Nakajima examined 220 patients with allergic rhinitis and divided them into two groups. One group received *sho seriyu to* supplements (consisting of pinelliae tuber; glycyrrhiza root; cinnamon bark; schisandra fruit; asiasarum root; paeoniae root radix; ephedrae root; and dried ginger) three times daily for two weeks; the other group received a placebo.

Both groups were monitored for symptoms such as frequency and severity of sneezing; runny nose; and nasal congestion. More than 44% of patients in the *sho seriyu to* group reported a "significant" relief of all symptoms, compared with only 18.1% in the placebo group. Moreover, *sho seriyu to* was not found to cause drowsiness in the study group.

Nakajima's findings were presented at the Hong Kong Allergy Convention in January.

Hawaii TCM College Gets Grant

The Traditional Chinese Medical College of Hawaii has received a \$3,000 grant from the Atherton Family Foundation. The grant will be used for a variety of improvements on campus, including an upgrade to the school's computer equipment; the addition of a computer for student research; and the purchase of software to help students learn about acupuncture and herbology.

The Atherton Family Foundation is one of the largest grant-making trusts in Hawaii, having offered support to educational programs and institutions in the state for the past 85 years.

Bringing Complementary Medicine to Ohio

According to the consulting firm Deloitte & Touche, as much as 32% of all medical institutions in the U.S. provide complementary and alternative therapies for their patients. That number will soon increase by one, when the Medical College of Ohio opens its Complementary Medicine Center in Maumee, a suburb of Toledo, later this spring.

"We recognize that complementary medicine ... is out there, and we realize practitioners need to be aware of and have some understanding of it," said Dr. Sanford Kimmel, the center's medical director and a board-certified pediatrician and family practitioner. In an interview with the *Toledo Blade*, Kimmel noted the college's decision to open the center was due in part to the growing number of people who have tried CAM treatments in the past few years, and the possible interactions that can occur between therapies.

"There's quite a bit of interest out there," he explained. "You have to learn something about it because patients come in and want to know if they can take some medicines, and they're already taking herbals, so you have to see if they interact."

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