



HEALTH & WELLNESS / LIFESTYLE

Preaching to the Choir: How to Extend Our Reach Beyond the CAM Community

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Professional conferences offer unique opportunities to network, be exposed to cutting-edge innovators, share your interests and work, and be inspired. As avid national and international conference presenters, we would like to encourage other practitioners of acupuncture and Traditional Asian Medicine to attend and participate in conferences. We know that acupuncturists are out in the field making innovative advances in managing a variety of conditions such as cancer, pain management, geriatrics and immune disorders. Despite our professional activities, however, our work is under-represented and not reflected at professional conferences. This column is a call to action: take a step away from preaching to the choir and take your seat at a larger table. Here are some recommendations for how to extend our reach, research, and expertise.

Presenting

Submitting abstracts and presenting at conferences is important for several reasons. First, these activities build your CV as an expert in your field. Secondly, participating in conferences offers you the ability to advocate for acupuncture/integrative and complementary health to clinicians and researchers outside our discipline to increase the visibility of our field. Thirdly, it offers you an opportunity to meet and be involved in professional exchanges with other innovators for future collaborations.

Attending

Many conferences offer free or discounted conference registration to those who volunteer. Why not pitch in to provide "stress-reduction" community acupuncture on site! There are many benefits of attending conferences including late-breaking information sharing, great travel locations, and business

expense write-offs (consult your tax professional).

Become a Member



Membership in non-CAM/acupuncture organizations is important because it gets you counted, provides voting rights, plus many societies have special interest groups that focus on an area of interest for our practice. We have compiled a list of societies or annual conferences that acupuncturists should consider submitting an abstract for presentation or attending. Some have CAM-related special interest groups to participate in. Most have special discount rates for student or early professional memberships so take advantage. We have included information below on mission, interest group, membership, and conference (any category missing from below means it was not applicable to that agency. Descriptions of "who they are" are taken from each group's website).

APHA/American Public Health Association - Who they are: "The American Public Health Association works to advance the health of all people and all communities. As the nation's leading public health organization, APHA strengthens the impact of public health professionals and provides a science-based voice in policy debates too often driven by emotion, ideology or financial interests. APHA is at the forefront of efforts to advance prevention, reduce health disparities and promote wellness." Interest group: APHA has a member section called Integrative, Complementary and Traditional Health Practices. Members represent a vibrant and diverse group of academics, researchers, providers and practitioners, consumers, students, policymakers and analysts, and advocacy specialists. (Disclosure: Author Beth Sommers is the Chair of this section.) Conferences info can be found on their website. Membership: rates start at \$75 for students; \$95 for those making under \$45K; and are capped at \$200 (with \$20 discount for going green) <https://www.apha.org/become-a-member>.

American Society on Aging - Who they are: "The American Society on Aging is an association of diverse individuals bound by a common goal: to support the commitment and enhance the knowledge and skills of those who seek to improve the quality of life of older adults and their families. The membership of ASA is multidisciplinary and inclusive of professionals who are concerned with the physical, emotional, social, economic and spiritual aspects of aging." Interest Group: Although there is not one specific to Integrative and Complementary Health, there are eight groups to choose from including one on Healthcare & Aging (www.asaging.org/asa-constituent-groups).

Conference info can be found on the website. Membership: ranges from \$75 to \$225
www.asaging.org/join.

American Psychological Association - Who they are: "APA has nearly 130,000 members and 54 divisions in subfields of psychology. We aspire to excel as a valuable, effective and influential organization advancing psychology as a science. Our strategic goals include expanding psychology's role in advancing health and increasing recognition of psychology as a science." Interest Group: Although there is no Integrative and Complementary Health specific division, there are 54 interest groups including one on Health. Conference Info can be found on their website. Membership: ranges from \$57 (graduate student), \$99 (first year membership), to \$247 basic
www.apa.org/membership/index.aspx.

Society for Integrative Oncology - Who they are: "The mission of the Society for Integrative Oncology is to advance evidence-based, comprehensive, integrative healthcare to improve the lives of people affected by cancer." Conference Info can be found on the website. Membership: \$85 (student) to \$205
www.integrativeonc.org/index.php/component/civicrm/?task=civicrm/contribute/transact&reset=1&id=1.

Society for Pediatric Pain Medicine - Who they are: The SPPM concept originated with directors and key leaders of acute and chronic pediatric pain medicine programs, who believed there was a need for a new professional society because of rapid advancement of highly specialized knowledge in the field, a great increase in the numbers of patients, and strong desire for collaboration and advocacy for infants, children, and adolescents with painful conditions. Conference Info can be found on the website. Membership: \$75 for an affiliate, info at www.pedspainmedicine.org/membership/join/.

Fascia Research Conference - Who they are: "The Fascia Research Congress was created by a multidisciplinary committee of basic science researchers and practicing health care professionals whose respective fields share a common focus and interest in the human body's soft connective tissue matrix. An important continuing initiative of the FRC is to foster understanding and collaboration among scientists working in fascia research and the various clinical professionals who address fasciae in their work with clients and patients." Interest Group: not applicable; although acupuncturists and other Integrative and Complementary Health providers are specifically named as clinicians who should attend. Conference info can be found on the website. Special one-day conference on Acupuncture: www.fasciacongress.org/2015/conference/joint-conference-fascia-cancer/.

American College of Sports Medicine - Who they are: "ACSM is the largest sports medicine and exercise science organization in the world. With more than 50,000 members and certified professionals worldwide, ACSM is dedicated to advancing and integrating scientific research to provide educational and practical applications of exercise science and sports medicine." Interest Groups: Twenty to choose from. Although none are specific to Integrative and Complementary Health,

a few that might be of interest include: aging, cancer, health, fitness and wellness coaching, minority health and research, and nutrition. Conference info can be found on the website. Membership: Professional allied health membership is \$99, or only \$10 for students
www.acsm.org/join-acsm/membership-options-benefits.

By becoming involved in other societies and their conferences, members of our profession stand to make significant professional and personal gains. By showcasing our medicine, we have the opportunity to extend the benefits of acupuncture and Traditional Asian Medicine to groups that may be less familiar with our work. This ultimately benefits the public by offering additional options for care. We benefit as agents of change and thought leaders in the evolving healthcare market-place. A win-win for all!

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