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# What's so Special about Chinese Medicine?

By Jocelyn Joy, MS, L.Ac.



Even though Chinese Medicine has been practiced in this country for many years it is still poorly understood. This, I believe, is entirely the fault of the practitioners of this powerful medicine, including myself. I am hoping that in this small article I can explain what is so special about Chinese Medicine and in the process dispel some common misconceptions.

## 1. Chinese Medicine is a Comprehensive Medical System

While many think just of acupuncture, Chinese Medicine is actually a comprehensive medical system which includes acupuncture, therapeutic massage (Tui Na, etc) food therapy, lifestyle therapy, and internal as well as external use of herbs.

Because it has so many ways to treat it handles a variety of issues; dermatological, respiratory, digestive, gynecological, orthopedic, psychological, circulatory, infectious diseases, and so on.

## 2. Chinese Medicine maintains a holistic view of health

Holistic refers to seeing and treating the whole person, not just a dysfunctional organ. As a practitioner of Chinese Medicine I want to know what the symptoms the person is experiencing then I want to step back a bit and look at the body as a whole. I want to understand how this condition developed, the person's unique constitution and lifestyle factors, the relationships between the imbalanced areas and other areas. Often times the presenting symptoms are but a reaction caused by some other imbalance that needs to be addressed.

## 3. Chinese Medicine theory and practice are logically consistent and reproducible

Chinese Medicine is not just folk medicine. It has developed a theoretical framework that includes a clear definition of health, etiology of diseases, symptoms and patterns of disease, treatment principles, and treatment protocols. This system is logically consistent both forwards and backwards. If I see a treatment protocol I will instantly know what the treatment principles are and in what order of importance. I will also be able to name the pattern or disease and have a good idea of its etiology.

## 4. Chinese Medicine treats each person individually

I may have several patients who have low back pain and each one of them I might treat differently. For instance one person may have been a construction worker and hurt his back while working. Another person may be very fragile and weak and works sitting at a desk. Another may be an older person. Each of these people I would treat with different herbs, acupuncture points, and give different lifestyle advice because they are different people.

## **5. Chinese Medicine has fewer side-effects than bio-medicine**

Acupuncture, if done well, will act to bring the body back into balance so that it has the ability to take care of itself. My personal philosophy is that Less is More, and will attempt to use the fewest and most effective points to provide the body with just enough information to take over the job. As a Practitioner of Chinese Medicine my job is to get the body back into harmony and health. Even though I may know where to insert needles, ultimately it is the body that takes over the healing process, I just assist. Herbs typically have fewer side effects than pharmaceuticals because we use whole herb and take advantage of the synergistic effects of all the herbs in the formula. Herbal formulas are complex and seek to address the primary presenting symptoms, secondary issues, and harmonize the effects of all the herbs with the specific individual.

Biomedicine often uses an isolated, refined, and concentrated chemical that has one or two physiological effects generally ignoring the possible effects of the variety of substances in the original medicinal.

## **6. Chinese Medicine focuses on health and longevity**

The best doctors of Chinese Medicine in ancient China worked for the emperors and their job was to keep the emperor and his family healthy, strong, and virile. Those practitioners understood that to prevent a disease before it manifested was the highest form of medicine.

This medicine is so well suited for health preservation and disease prevention, but so few actually use it as such. Our biomedical health system in the United States is very slanted to treating sickness once it arises. Most of us are conditioned to seek treatment when the symptoms are pronounced enough to limit our function in some way.

We hope you have found this information useful. If you are interested in more information about Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine in San Diego and its environs, please visit Joy Acupuncture Health Centre online at [www.joyacupuncture.com](http://www.joyacupuncture.com), 2602 First Ave., Suite 103 San Diego, CA 92103, 619-322-4492