

ROZANA SANI
rsani@nst.com.my

TRADITIONAL and complementary medicine plays a major role in healthcare.

The Health Ministry has acknowledged that traditional and complementary medicine is an important component in the country's healthcare system, and is supporting efforts to integrate it with modern medicine as stipulated in the Traditional and Complementary Medicine Blueprint 2018-2027.

Traditional and complementary medicine higher education programmes accredited by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency include those in traditional Chinese medicine, Malay massage, homeopathy and chiropractic.

International Medical University (IMU) Centre for Complementary and Alternative Medicine director Professor Michael Thomas Haneline said there are more than 13 government hospitals offering traditional and complementary medicine services in the country.

"More people are recognising the benefits and advantages of traditional medicine. This increases the demand for holistic care regionally and globally," he said.

"There is a revival and demand for Chinese medicine even in western nations. Certain Chinese medicinal practices, like acupuncture and herbal remedies, are integrated with western medicine for pain management and to reduce the side effects of prescription drugs.

"Graduates who study traditional Chinese medicine will have a lot of opportunities to work in government hospitals and private Chinese medicine clinics. They can also seek employment at Chinese medicine pharmaceutical companies.

"In Malaysia, traditional and complementary medicine is a big business with herbal imports being three to four times the value of western medicine. The Health Ministry is implementing policies related to training and registration of practitioners with the aim of integrating Chinese medicine into the national healthcare delivery system."

IMU offers the following undergraduate programmes: Bachelor of Science in Chinese Medicine (four years) and Bachelor of Science in Chiropractic (up to five years). Both require completion of a pre-university programme in science stream. The varsity offers Master of Science in Acupuncture as its postgraduate programme.

"In line with the national policy, the Chinese Medicine programme at IMU is delivered in an integrative manner, where students will acquire knowledge of Chinese medicine and western medical sciences. The programme comprises

Complementing mainstream medicine



A patient seeking consultation at the IMU Healthcare - Chiropractor Centre. PICTURES COURTESY OF INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL UNIVERSITY.



Michael Thomas Haneline



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MELISSA KIOH
IMU chiropractic degree holder

western and Chinese Medicine subjects," said Haneline.

"Collaboration with partner schools in Australia and the United Kingdom enables students to complete their studies overseas with our credit transfer option. The programme develops ethical, passionate graduates with skills in clinical and business management to serve the local or international community."

After obtaining a degree in Chinese Medicine, graduates can become practitioners, and later specialise in acupuncture and internal medicine, or pursue postgraduate degrees.

The IMU Chiropractic programme was designed and accredited in accordance with international standards set in place by the Council on Chiropractic Education Australasia (CCEA).

In Malaysia, there is one chiropractor to 250,000 people compared with one to 4,500 in the United States. Graduates will be able to establish themselves in a rapidly growing field of healthcare.

Graduates with a chiropractic degree can advance to areas like sports chiropractic or orthopaedics.

IMU chiropractic bachelor's degree holder Melissa Kioh Sheng Hui, 26, is pursuing a doctorate degree in medicine at the University of Malaya. She did her Master's in Public Health at University College Dublin.

Despite her studies, Kioh is a practising chiropractor.

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Tay Pei Shen, who works at IMU Healthcare-Chiropractor Centre, said her interest in becoming a chiropractor started after her scoliosis treatment when she was younger.

The 24-year-old recalls her studies at IMU

with fondness, particularly the International Clinical Externship Programme 2016 in the Philippines.

"It was a cooperative outreach effort between IMU and RMIT University. We travelled to villages in Subic Bay, Tagaytay and Makati to provide chiropractic treatment to locals."

Pearly Chua Heng Huei, 24, an intern at Tung Shin Hospital, studied Chinese Medicine at IMU and applied for credit transfer so that her final two years were done in Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine (SHUTCM).

The experience opened up job opportunities, Chua said, not only in organisations like Tung Shin, but also private clinics.

After graduating from IMU with a Bachelor in Chinese medicine, Sng Kim Sia, 23, is pursuing a postgraduate degree in Traditional Chinese Medicine Osteopathology Traumatology at SHUTCM.

"I chose to further my studies after specialising in osteopathology traumatology during my internship programme where my patients were mostly with orthopaedic related conditions such as sprained ankle, low back pain and frozen shoulders. Integrating allopathic and Chinese medicine to improve patients' recovery is one of the strengths of SHUTCM, and I wish to learn from them."

Chinese medicine practitioner at IMU Healthcare-Chinese Medicine Centre Amelia Ang Sze Yun, 26, developed her interest in Chinese medicine when she received an appreciation letter from her patient during here clinical year in RMIT.

"It is motivating to see that your treatment has a positive effect on patients.

"As Chinese medicine practitioners, we provide consultation, treatment and herbal prescription. Treatments that we offer are acupuncture, cupping and moxibustion.

"We can specialise in areas such as gynaecology, paediatrics and acupuncture."



Acupuncture integrated with western medicine can be used for pain management.