

Scientific eye on age-old practice

A MAJOR shift in how people think about their health and well-being from the conventional approach to traditional and complementary medicine, including acupuncture, is gradually occurring. Acupuncture is a practice that is grounded in holistic treatment, which is treating the whole body, rather than targeting the problem alone.

Acupuncture involves the insertion of thin needles into the skin to stimulate nerves, muscles and connective tissues with the goal of alleviating pain, tension and stress.

Some medical professionals are looking into the age-old practice with a scientific eye. Dr Goh C.L., head of the traditional and complementary medicine unit in Duchess of Kent Hospital in Sandakan, encourages primary healthcare staff to integrate acupuncture into healthcare.

"I wondered how acupuncture worked to promote pain relief. I enrolled in IMU's Master of Science in Acupuncture programme to delve into Chinese medicine. Alongside my medical training in allopathy, my knowledge of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) provides me with options to deal with pain complaints more confidently."

Dr C.Y. Liu, a veteran medical professional in anaesthesiology, shared that growing up, he would hear elders talk about "heaty" or "cooling" food. He had always questioned these beliefs, calling them mere superstition.

"I was lucky to get into medical school and trained to be an anaesthetic doctor. I have been privileged to be accepted as a lecturer in a public university that trains anaesthesia doctors. This line of

work and body of knowledge is based on research studies.

"However, my interest was piqued when I read about some cases where surgery was performed with acupuncture alone, without any drugs whatsoever. I soon came to learn that there are structured TCM courses available that is recognised by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency. Upon enrolling in the course, we were taught the principles and fundamentals of TCM but in modernised Western medical terms. The practical sessions were conducted using standards similar to medical schools."

If you have a bachelor's degree in TCM, medicine or its equivalent, consider enrolling in the two-and-a-half-year IMU's Master of Science in Acupuncture programme, which encapsulates both traditional knowledge as well as the scientific research done in acupuncture. The programme's intake is in September.

IMU also offers other postgraduate programmes, including taught Master in Science programmes in public health, analytical and pharmaceutical chemistry, molecular medicine, Master in Pharmacy Practice, postgraduate programmes in health professions education, Postgraduate Diploma in Diabetes Management and Education, Postgraduate Diploma in Implant Dentistry, Master of Business Administration in Healthcare Management and MSc and PhD by research.

■ For more information about this or other postgraduate programmes, call 03-2731 7272, email postgraduate@imu.edu.my or visit www.imu.edu.my



Some medical practitioners advocate for better integration of acupuncture into healthcare as a way to help patients manage pain.