

LETTER TO EDITOR

The First International Western and Chinese & Thai Medicine Workshop on Pain Therapy & Management, Targu Mures, Romania. November 25 – 28, 2019

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The First International Workshop on using combined Western and Traditional Medicine for Pain Therapy was successfully held in Romania, 2018. Medical doctors from Romania, China and Thailand participated as lecturers and demonstrators to more than 40 participants. At the conclusion of the workshop, the organizers, lecturers and participants overwhelmingly endorsed the proposals to organize the second workshop and to organize a clinical trial in developing a combined protocol for innovative pain therapy.

Keywords: western and traditional medicine, pain therapy, acupuncture, therapeutic massage, osteoarthritis

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Report

The 4-day workshop was successfully organized and executed at the Advanced Research Center of the University of Medicine, Pharmacy, Science and Technology (UMFST). The workshop was co-sponsored by the University of Medicine, Pharmacy, Science and Technology, Romania (UMFST), Shantou University Medical College (SUMC), China and Thammasat University (TU), Thailand. More than 40 participants registered for the workshop. They included doctors from UMFST, Targu Mures and other cities in Romania, as well as staff and medical students. In addition, six Thai Traditional Medicine students came from Thailand to attend the workshop. The lecturers included 2 traditional Chinese medicine doctors from China (Yong Xiao, Jiasheng Chen), 3 traditional Thai medicine doctors from Thailand (Pannawat Chaiyawatthanananthn, Puritat Kanokkangadal and Arounpon Itharat), 1 Romanian doctor who specialized in homeopathic and ozone therapies (Adrian Alecu), and 2 Western medicine doctors from UMFST (Horatiu Popoviciu and Monica Copotoiu). A variety of activities from the Workshop are shown in Figure 1.

The workshop started with a short opening ceremony. Although Rector Azamfirei was unable to attend, three Vice Rectors (Borda, Marginian and Enachescu) came to show their endorsement of the workshop, and to represent the Rector. The workshop was organized, in general, to have interactive lectures during the mornings and demonstrations with volunteers during the afternoons. Therefore,

both lecturers and participants were active in communicating with each other for 4 days. After their sharing of knowledge and technologies from the three countries, the afternoon of the 4th day was used to discuss how to organize collaborative projects. With active communication and support from everyone, the most important agreement was the organization of a tri-national project for the three participating countries. The project will be an unprecedented clinical trial involving Western medication, Chinese acupuncture and Thai massage on treatment of specific types of patients who have difficult-to-cure chronic pain. This is anticipated to have a 3-month therapeutic phase with a 3-month follow-up phase. The protocol will be harmonized among the three countries together with specific monitoring and evaluation procedures. The overall goal of this international collaborative project is to develop highly innovative therapeutic protocols which can bring significant improvement of medical care to patients around the world.

Besides having excellent academic value, the workshop also provided ample of opportunity to share cultural experience. For example, the 6 Thai students performed Traditional Thai dancing which was complimented by Traditional Romanian dancing during the Farewell Dinner.

The clinical trial and other agreed collaborations will form the foundation for the proposed Center of Traditional and Western Medicine for Innovative Therapy at UMFST. In addition, several participants have requested and volunteered to organize the second international workshop in UMFST within two years.

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Fig. 1. Top row: Delegations from China and Thailand with two of the organizers (Au and Alecu) were interviewed on TV by the university; Second row: Dr. Xiao demonstrated acupuncture and Dr. Chen demonstrated cupping procedures on volunteers; Third row: Dr. Puritat and Thailand students demonstrated Thai massage and exercise to reduce pain and stress; Bottom row: 6 Traditional Thai medicine students performed traditional Thai dances, together with Traditional Romanian dancers.

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