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Treating Hep B With Traditional Chinese Medicine

Working with traditional Chinese medicine and its practitioners may be key to reducing hepatitis B in the Chinese community, which is why the Asian Liver Center at Stanford University will be hosting its 5th Annual Hepatitis B Prevention and Education Symposium: Building Partnerships with Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners.

The closed event, aimed toward students and traditional Chinese medicine practitioners, takes place Aug. 3 and will be held in partnership with the Council of Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine Associations, the American College of Traditional Chinese Medicine (ACTCM) and the California University of Oriental Medicine.

In 2004, Stanford surveyed 1,200 Asians and found that 67 percent turn to traditional Chinese medicine practitioners first, over their primary care physician. As hepatitis B affects one in 10 Asian and Pacific Islanders, the Asian Liver Center saw the need to educate TCM practitioners about the disease so they can then, in turn, inform and encourage their patients and clients to get screened.

At the Hep B Symposium, the future TCM doctors will learn about chronic HBV and its prevalence in Asian communities; the up-to-date modes of prevention, diagnosis and management of chronic hepatitis B; and the importance of safe needle techniques.

"The Asian Liver Center at

Stanford University recognizes the important and influential role that cultural and linguistically sensitive Traditional Chinese Medicine doctors will play in uniting against hepatitis B," said Dr. Samuel So, director of the Asian Liver Center. "This knowledge will empower these future doctors to take control of the disproportionately high rate of chronic hepatitis B among the Asian and Pacific Islander community."

Jordan Su, volunteer coordinator for the symposium, said it is also critical to teach TCM practitioners about how the disease is transmitted, especially for those conducting acupuncture treatments. As the disease is contracted through blood, those who do not use gloves may be at high risk.

ACTCM President Lixin Huang said whereas Western medicine focuses on healthcare after the patient is sick, traditional Chinese medicine emphasizes prevention. Acupuncture can also be a helpful treatment option for hepatitis B patients.

The liver is an organ that naturally detoxifies what people take in, but for those with hepatitis B, their livers are compromised, said

Healing the body and the mind

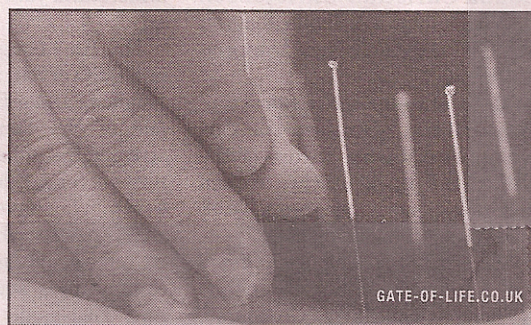


Eunice Kan, a graduate from the ACTCM, who is interested in attending the symposium.

"Acupuncture is great for boosting the immune system and for detoxification," Kan said. "In addition to treating the body, it also treats the mind and spirit, helping people relax."

Kan notes, however, that patients with hepatitis B still must visit their primary care physicians to check on their blood work, and acupuncture and herbs should not be the sole treatment.

For more about the S.F. Hep B Free campaign: sfhepbfree.org.



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