

What is taught in degrees in herbal and traditional Chinese medicine?

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This document provides some of the evidence about what is taught to students on the sort of course that the Pittilo report wishes to make compulsory. It is quite clear when you look at the actual content of the BSc (Hons) that he recommends as 'proper training' that what is taught endangers the public. This has largely escaped attention because universities who teach this sort of stuff try to keep it secret, and because the bureaucratic mentality finds it easier to tick boxes than to do the necessary investigation.

Here is an extract from a handout about "Zangfu (internal organs)" used in the BSc (Hons) Chinese Medicine at the University of Westminster. It is about the spleen and it is utter nonsense. It is important to remember that this is not being taught as an interesting ancient myth that arose before anything was known about the spleen. It is being taught as a basis for treating sick people in 2009.

It forms a basis for treatment that endangers patients.

Spleen

The main functions of the Spleen are as follows;

1. Controls Transformation and Transportation (T&T) of qi

Transformation here means the actual process of digestion and absorption. The Spleen digests the food and absorbs the essential substances along with part of the fluid supplied by the Stomach. It then transmits these substances to the Lung and Heart from where they are sent to nourish the whole body.

The Spleen receives ingested food and then separates the pure from the relatively impure. The 'impure' parts are passed on to the Small Intestine, Large Intestine and Bladder for further processing. The pure part *qi* (*gu qi*) is sent up to the Lungs where it combines with air to form *zong qi* and then further on to the Heart where it helps form Blood (with the aid of *yuan qi*). The Spleen is seen as the root of post-heaven essence (*houtian zhi jing*) and the production of *qi* and blood.

...

2. Rules/controls the muscles and limbs

The Spleen function of T&T means that in a normal healthy body there is sufficient *qi* and blood to nourish the muscles and flesh (strong, sufficient bulk), and the muscles will be warm, energized and firm.

3. Governs/controls Blood

Spleen has a controlling role to play in the holding of blood within the vessels and its proper pathways.

4. Controls the 'Raising of Qi' (helps hold the organs in place)

Spleen is said to help keep the organs in place, mainly due the action of the *qi* being sent upward to the Lungs which is said to help keep the organs in place. If this function is weakened, then prolapse can occur.

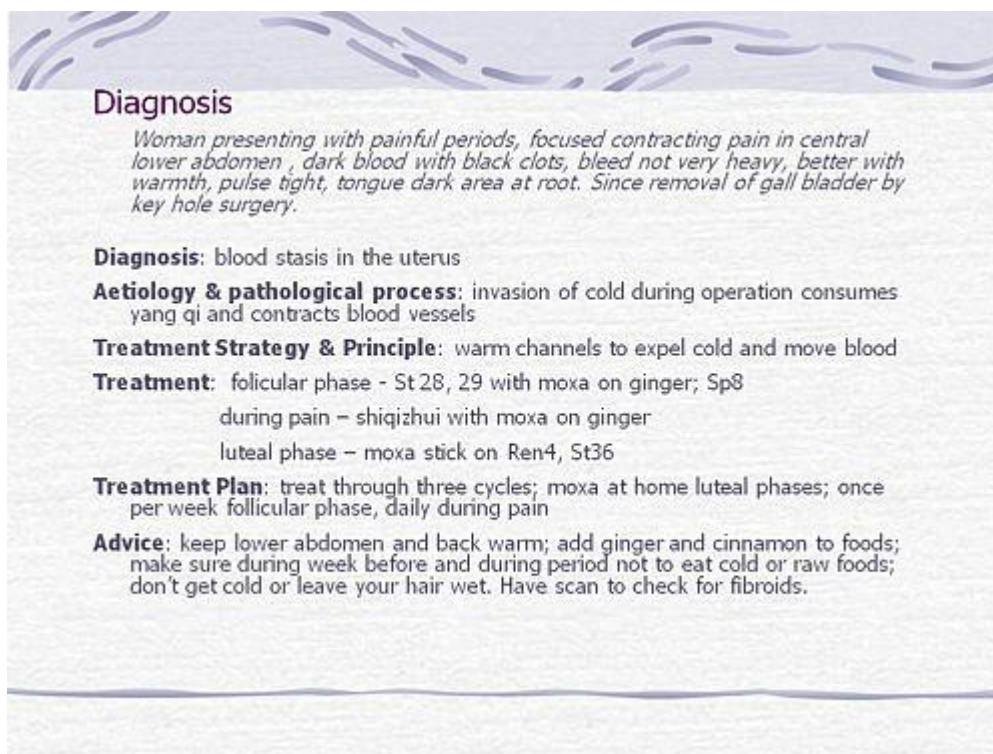
5. Opens into the Mouth and manifests in the Lips.

Spleen has a functional relationship to the mouth and its surrounding muscles via eating. If the Spleen is healthy the mouth can discern the 5 flavours and the lips are red and moist.

6. Houses Thought.

(and it is affected by pensiveness/over thinking)

Here is a slide from another lecture on traditional Chinese medicine ([more here](#)). After the usual myths about “Qi” we come to a real patient.



Diagnosis

Woman presenting with painful periods, focused contracting pain in central lower abdomen, dark blood with black clots, bleed not very heavy, better with warmth, pulse tight, tongue dark area at root. Since removal of gall bladder by key hole surgery.

Diagnosis: blood stasis in the uterus

Aetiology & pathological process: invasion of cold during operation consumes yang qi and contracts blood vessels

Treatment Strategy & Principle: warm channels to expel cold and move blood

Treatment: follicular phase - St 28, 29 with moxa on ginger; Sp8
during pain – shiqizhui with moxa on ginger
luteal phase – moxa stick on Ren4, St36

Treatment Plan: treat through three cycles; moxa at home luteal phases; once per week follicular phase, daily during pain

Advice: keep lower abdomen and back warm; add ginger and cinnamon to foods; make sure during week before and during period not to eat cold or raw foods; don't get cold or leave your hair wet. Have scan to check for fibroids.

At the top, the patient is described

Diagnosis

Woman presenting with painful periods, focused contracting pain in central abdomen, dark blood with black clots . . .

Treat with ginger and moxa? When [this appeared on my blog](#) it attracted this comment

“The University of Westminster “diagnosis” described above is actually extremely worrying. Plainly this is a woman of child bearing age, and there is a possibility of an ectopic pregnancy, with bleeding being mistaken for a period. This requires immediate medical referral. Alternatively, there could be endometriosis or a variety of cancers. The ‘advice’ to scan for fibroids suggests neither necessity nor urgency. Waiting 3 cycles while moxibustion makes no difference could lead to sterility, serious illness or worse.”

This sort mockery of medicine is very dangerous to patients who get into the hands of people trained in this way.

An examination paper in acupuncture

This exam paper was set by the University of Salford in 2009, though the university has now closed down the course for which it was set.



UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD

CRN: 14214

**SCHOOL OF COMMUNITY HEALTH SCIENCES AND
SOCIAL CARE**

EXAMINATION

PROGRAMMES:

BSc (HONS) TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE (ACUPUNCTURE)

Q1. Which of the following explain(s) the physiological relationships between qi and blood/xue.

- A. Qi is the source of all material in the body and blood carries the energy
- B. Blood is the source of all material in the body including Qi
- C. Qi drives blood moving and blood carries Qi
- D. Qi flows in the channels and blood is stored in organs
- E. Qi produce blood and blood is the mother of Qi

Q5. What are the four fundamental substances?

- A. Qi
- B. Blood/Xue
- C. Spirit/mind
- D. Jing/essence
- E. Jin ye/body fluid
- F. Organs

Q23. Explain the meaning of 'liver and kidney have a common source'.
(10 marks)

This is really quite absurd. The students are being seriously misled. The students on this degree are spending three years memorising things like these that are simply untrue.

And one more question,

Q24. In Chinese Medicine, anger is associated with liver and the suppression of anger causes Liver qi stagnation. Explain your understanding of the statement in 100 words.

(10 marks)

It seems that in the 21st century, acupuncture students are being taught the crudest sort of ideas about vital spirits.

It is important to remember that students are not being taught this has history or myth, but as a basis for going out to treat sick people.

This sort of 'properly trained' practitioner is a danger to patients.

A Chinese medicine lecture

Again this lecture is from the University of Westminster.

San jiao

- Understood to have function but no form or shape (not really an organ, but a collection of functions)
- A fu (yang organ)
- Has 3 main aspects (much disputed and discussed in literature, but general agreement on 3 areas)

3 aspects of san jiao

- 1. Specific body areas or cavities
- 2. Waterways or pathways for fluids to travel around the body
- 3. As a pathway for *yuan qi*

Upper jiao

- Function:
SJ assists the Lungs 'dispensing function', spreading fluids to skin in form of fine **mist or vapour** (so it helps regulate fluid production in the upper *jiao* via the Lung function) and spreading *wei qi* to the surface

Lower jiao

- The *San Jiao* assists in the processes that allow the separation of the 'more pure' from the 'less pure' fluids.
- This then allows the 'dirty' fluids to be excreted via the Bladder
- The 'more pure' is sent back up to the Lung for 're-cycling'

These first four slides contradict directly all that has been learned about physiology and anatomy in the last few 100 years

It gets even worse,

Curious organs – Gall Bladder

Considered a curious organ because unlike other *yang* organs, it stores bile (pure fluid)

Also said to give ability to judge clearly and give the capacity to make decisions

It works closely with Liver to help give resoluteness to plan one's life

Curious organs

Marrow, bones and brains

- The *yin* aspect of *jing* gives rise to Marrow,
- Marrow helps fill the brain and forms bone marrow. Basis for mentality.
- The bones also come under the heading of the kidney. Considered a curious organ because they store bone-marrow. If *jing* is insufficient, marrow and then bones will lose nourishment.

The students are taught that marrow fills the brain. This is so absurd as to leave one speechless.

Anyone who believes them (as required to pass the degree) is a menace to the safety of patients,

A lecture on herbal approaches for patients with cancer

This lecture is perhaps the most shocking example so far. It is not only totally devoid of evidence but it provides a direct incitement to make claims that are illegal under the Cancer Act 1939

HERBAL APPROACHES FOR PATIENTS WITH CANCER

NIKI LAWRENCE

CANCER TREATMENT & THE LAW

- Legally, you cannot claim to cure cancer
- This is not a problem because: *'we treat people, not diseases'*.

This second slide (slide 3) is quite outrageous. It **certainly poses a huge danger to patients**. It is a direct incentive to make illegal, and untrue claims by using weasel words in an attempt to stay *just* on the right side of the law. But that, sadly, is standard practice in alternative medicine,

Slide 11 is mostly meaningless. “Strengthen vitality” sounds good but means nothing. And “enhancing the immune system” is what alternative medicine advocates always say when they can think of nothing else. Its meaning is ill-defined and there is no reason to think that any herbs do it.

The idea of a ‘tonic’ was actually quite common in real medicine in the 1950s. The term slowly vanished as it was realised that it was a figment of the imagination. In the fantasy world of alternative medicine, it lives on.

HERBAL STRATEGIES

- **Tonic therapy:** herbs that strengthen vitality, using herbal adaptogens and immune enhancers
- **Detoxification:** herbs with antioxidant, anti-inflammatory effects and improve function of the eliminative organs such as liver and lymph system
- **Anti-tumour:** herbs that aid gene-repair, inhibit enzymes, alter the actions of hormones, as well as having direct cytotoxic effects

Detoxification, a marketing term not a medical one, has been extensively debunked quite recently. The use of the word by The [Prince of Wales' company](#), Duchy Originals recently [fell foul of the Advertising Standards Authority](#), and his herbal 'remedies' were [zapped by the MHRA](#) (Medicines and Health Regulatory Authority).

And of course it is well-known that the [antioxidant myth](#) is a long-disproved hypothesis that has become a mere marketing term.

“Inhibits the recurrence of cancer”!

That sounds a direct claim for a curative effect. But if it is so good why is it not even mentioned in the two main resources for information about herbs?

In the UK we have the National Library for Health Complementary and Alternative Medicine Specialist Library (NeLCAM), now a [part of NHS Evidence](#). It was [launched in 2006](#).

The clinical lead was none other than [Peter Fisher](#), clinical director of the Royal London Homeopathic Hospital,

and the Queen's homeopathic physician. The library was developed with the School of Integrated Health at the [University of Westminster](#) (where this particular slide was shown to undergraduates). Nobody could accuse these people of being hostile to alternative medicine,

It seems odd, then, that NeLCAM does not seem to think that *Centella asiatica*, is even worth mentioning.

In the USA we have the National Center for Alternative and Complementary Medicine (NCCAM), an organisation that is so friendly to alternative medicine that it has spent a billion dollars on research in the area, though it has produced not a single good treatment for that vast expenditure. But NCCAM too does not even mention *Centella asiatica* in [its herb list](#). It does get a mention in [Cochrane reviews](#) but only as a cosmetic cream and as an unproven treatment for poor venous circulation in the legs. Nothing at all about cancer.

CENTELLA ASIATICA (GOTU KOLA)

- Traditionally use: skin conditions including eczema, psoriasis, burns, leprosy, leg ulcers and to enhance mental concentration
- Excellent as a postoperative herb as it promotes healing, decreases inflammation and scar tissue formation and inhibits the recurrence of the cancer

The term “lymph remedy” has no well-defined meaning at all. It seems to be just another marketing term?

“especially valuable in the treatment of breast, throat and uterus cancer.”

That is a very dramatic claim. It is as though the hapless students were being tutored in doublespeak. What is meant by “especially valuable in the treatment of”? Clearly a desperate patient would interpret those words as meaning that there was at least a chance of a cure. That would be a wicked deception because there isn't the slightest reason to think it works. Once again there this “cure” is not even mentioned in either NELCAM or NCCAM. *Phytolacca* is mentioned, as Pokeweed, in Wikipedia but no claims are mentioned even there. And it isn't mentioned in Cochrane reviews either. The dramatic claims are utterly unfounded. They are probably illegal too. But students must learn them to pass the exam.

DETOXIFICATION HERBS

- *Phytolacca decandra* (Poke root)
- One of the best lymph remedies & a good alternative
- Specifically indicated for glandular swellings, especially valuable in the treatment of breast, throat & uterus cancer
- Only registered herbalists can prescribe it

Mistletoe is one of the more common things used in alternative medicine.

NHS Evidence (NeLCAM) lists [three completed assessments](#). One concludes that more research is needed. Another concludes that “Rigorous trials of mistletoe extracts fail to demonstrate efficacy of this therapy”, and the third says “The evidence from RCTs to support the view that the application of mistletoe extracts has impact on survival or leads to an improved ability to fight cancer or to withstand anticancer treatments is weak”.

ANTI-TUMOUR HERBS

Viscum album (Mistletoe)

- Used in Europe for hypertension and cancer
- Lectin component is toxic to several different tumours types
- Polysaccharides: thought to stimulate immunity
- Anthroposophical physicians inject a fermented extract of mistletoe called *Iscador*

NCCAM [says of mistletoe](#)

- More than 30 human studies using mistletoe to treat cancer have been done since the early 1960s, but major weaknesses in many of these have raised doubts about their findings (see [Question 6](#)).
- Very few bad side effects have been reported from the use of mistletoe extract, though mistletoe plants and berries are poisonous to humans (see [Question 7](#)).
- The [U.S. Food and Drug Administration](#) (FDA) has not approved mistletoe as a treatment for cancer or any other medical condition (see [Question 8](#)).
- The FDA does not allow injectable mistletoe to be imported, sold, or used except for [clinical](#) research (see [Question 8](#)).

Cochrane reviews lists [several reviews of mistletoe](#) with similar conclusions. [For example](#) “The evidence from RCTs to support the view that the application of mistletoe extracts has impact on survival or leads to an improved ability to fight cancer or to withstand anticancer treatments is weak”.

us

“Indicated for cancers . . . colon/rectal, uterine, breast, lung“. A cure for lung cancer?

That, of course, depends on how you interpret the weasel words “indicated for”. Even [Wikipedia](#) makes no mention of any claims that *Thuja* benefits cancer. NHS Evidence (NeLCAM) doesn’t mention *Thuja* for any indication. Neither does NCCAM. Nor Cochrane reviews. That is not the impression the hapless students of this BSc lecture were given.

ANTI-TUMOUR HERBS

- *Thuja occidentalis* (Arbor vitae or Thuja)
- Antiviral, antimitotic & immunity enhancer
- Indicated for cancers of possible viral origin eg colon/rectal, uterine, breast , lung
- Also effective for precancerous conditions such as warts and polyps

In my view suggestions that you can cure lung cancer with this tree are just plain wicked.

This mixture is pure snake oil, and it isn't even spelled correctly,

Harry Hoxsey's treatment centres in the USA were closed by court order in the 1950s. But it is being taught to herbal medicine students in 2009.

HOXEY FORMULA

- Harry Hoxey started the Hoxey clinic in Mexico

Survey of cancer clinics = only Hoxey Centre came up above chance level (5% above)

- | | |
|---|----------|
| ● Potassium Iodide | 150gm, |
| ● Liquorice, Alder, Buckthorn & Red Clover | aa 20mg, |
| ● Roots of Burdock, Stillingia, Berberis & Poke | aa 10mg, |
| ● Cascara and Prickly Ash | aa 5mg. |

More unfounded claims when it says "treated successfully many cancer patients". No references and no data to support the claim. It is utterly unfounded and claims to the contrary endanger the public.

ELI JONES COMPOUND SYRUP OF SCROPHULARIA

- An Eclectic physician who during his career treating successfully many cancer patients

- | | |
|--|---------|
| ● <i>Scrophularia nodosa</i> (Figwort leaves and root) | 1&1/4oz |
| ● <i>Phytolacca decandra</i> (Poke root) | 1/4oz |
| ● <i>Rumex crispus</i> (Yellow dock) | 1/4oz |
| ● <i>Celastrus acandens</i> (False Bittersweet bark and root) | 1/8oz |
| ● <i>Podophyllum peltatum</i> (Mandrake root) | 1/8oz |
| ● <i>Juniper communis</i> (Juniper berries) Slightly less than | 1/8oz |
| ● <i>Zanthoxylum americanum</i> (Prickly ash berries) | 1/24oz |
| ● <i>Guaiaicum officinale</i> (Lignum vitae bark/heartwood) | 1/16oz |

Gerson therapy is one of the most notorious and unpleasant of the quack cancer treatments.

The Gerson Institute is on San Diego, but their clinics are in Mexico and Hungary. It is illegal in the USA.

According to the [American Cancer Society](#) you get “a strict low-salt, low-fat, vegetarian diet and drinking juice from about twenty pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables each day. One glass of juice is consumed each hour, thirteen times a day. In addition, patients are given several coffee enemas each day. Various supplements, such as potassium, vitamin B12, pancreatic enzymes, thyroid hormone, and liver extracts, are used to stimulate organ function, particularly of the liver and thyroid.”. At one time you also got several glasses of raw calf liver every day but after infections killed several people¹ carrot juice was given instead.

[Cancer Research UK](#) says “there is no evidence to show that Gerson therapy works as a cure for cancer”, and “The Gerson diet can cause some very serious side effects.” Nobody (except perhaps the Prince of Wales) has any belief in this unpleasant, toxic and expensive folk-lore.

Again patients are endangered by teaching this sort of stuff.

And finally, the last slide in the lecture diverts from the topic to make the usual swipe at vaccines. It's nothing to do with herbalism, but just about every alternative medicine advocate seems to subscribe to the anti-vaccination lobby.. It is almost as though they have an active preference for things that are known to be wrong. They seem to believe that medicine and science are

GERSON THERAPY

- Diet = juicing, fresh organic vegetables & soups
- Emphasis sodium/potassium balance
- **Coffee enemas:** Caffeine is transported to the portal vein via the rectum where it stimulates the liver
- An information pack can be obtained from the 'Gerson Support Group' which is a registered charity that can offer support and literature

VACCINES ?

- Donald Yance in his book *Herbal Medicine, Healing and Cancer* considers that vaccines weaken the overall immune system, causing confusion in its responses to cancer cells
- Eli Jones considered vaccination a significant cause of the rise in cancer, second only to the effects of fear & unrelenting stress to the nervous system

part of an enormous conspiracy to kill everyone.

Perhaps this dangerous propaganda might have been ameliorated if the students had been shown this slide ([from a talk by Melinda Wharton](#) about CDC numbers).

Comparison of 20th Century Annual Morbidity and Current Morbidity: Vaccine-Preventable Diseases

| Disease | 20th Century Annual Morbidity† | 2006 Reported Cases † | Percent Decrease |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Smallpox | 29,005 | 0 | 100% |
| Diphtheria | 21,053 | 0 | 100% |
| Measles | 530,217 | 55 | > 99% |
| Mumps | 162,344 | 6,584 | 96% |
| Pertussis | 200,752 | 15,632 | 92% |
| Polio (paralytic) | 16,316 | 0 | 100% |
| Rubella | 47,745 | 11 | > 99% |
| Congenital Rubella Syndrome | 152 | 1 | > 99% |
| Tetanus | 580 | 41 | 93% |
| Haemophilus influenzae | 20,000 | 208* | 99% |

† Source: JAMA. 2007;298(18):2155-2163
 * 29 type b and 179 unknown (< 5 years of age)

Lectures like this consistently preach against vaccination. The “education” that students get in this sort of degree, if it were taken seriously, would result in people dying still from smallpox, diphtheria, tetanus and rabies,

This is the sort of ‘education’ which the Pittilo report wants to make compulsory.

Conclusion

This selection of slides shows that much of the material that is taught in degrees in herbal medicine and Chinese medicine poses a real danger to public safety and to public health.