



INTERNATIONAL
MEDICAL TAI CHI and QIGONG ASSOCIATION

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iMTQA 2021 Virtual Conference Program Brochure

Virtually Hosted by D'Youville College, Buffalo, NY

October 23rd 2021

iMTQA 2021 Virtual Conference Program: Saturday, October 23, 2021; 10 am to 3 pm EST.

TAI CHI & QIGONG: ANCIENT PRACTICE FOR MODERN TIMES

Pre-Conference Event

9:45 am-9:55	Everything Zoom Learn how to switch between speaker and presentation, or see them both equally, or watch the gallery during a presentation. You can also increase the number of people you can see in the gallery, and learn how to control the video backgrounds and filters.	CJ Rhoads, D.Ed. Professor, Kutztown University, Pennsylvania
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iMTQA Conference program

Time	Event/Activities	Presenter
10:00 am-10:15	Opening remarks	Joe Baumgarden, DPT D'Youville College Health HUB Co-Chair, iMTQA 2021 Virtual Conference Penelope Klein, PT, EdD Professor Emeritus, D'Youville College, NY David Rosenthal, MD Professor, Harvard Medical School, President of iMTQA
10:15 am-10:40	Tai Chi for Treatment of Depression: A Randomized Trial	Albert Yeung, MD, ScD Director of Primary Care Research at the Depression Clinical & Research Program, Massachusetts General Hospital Assoc. Prof. Harvard Medical School

10:40 am-11:05	Modernizing Tai Chi and Qigong for Health	Paul Lam, MD Director, Tai Chi for Heal Institute, University of New South Wales, Australia
11:05 am-11:30	The effect of Tai Chi on Mobility for stroke survivors: systematic review and meta-analysis	Rhayun Song, RN, PhD Professor, College of Nursing Chungnam National University, South Korea
11:30 am-11:55	Qigong exercise in people with fibromyalgia – ready for a needed implementation trial	Wen Liu, Ph.D. Director of Neuromuscular Research Laboratory Department of Physical Therapy & Rehabilitation Science University of Kansas Medical Center
11:55 am-12:20	The Efficacy of a Qigong Program on Serum Levels of IL-6, IL-8 and IL-10 and Pain Post-High Intensity Exercise in Patients with Fibromyalgia	Caio Sarmiento, PT, PhD Assistant Professor Department of Physical Therapy California State University, Fresno
12:20 pm-12:45	Unique Physiological Effects of Tai Chi Compared to Aerobic Exercise: Implications for Chronic Conditions	Tony Gryffin, PhD, Montana State University – Northern Havre MT
12:45 pm-1:10	Medical Tai Chi & Qigong as Effective Trauma-Sensitive Practices	Brian Trzaskos, PT LMT CSCS CMP MI-C Institute for Rehabilitative Qigong & Tai Chi Willsboro NY
1:10 pm-1:35	Collaborative Integrative Medicine Research Agenda in Healthcare	CJ Rhoads, D.Ed. Professor, Kutztown University, Pennsylvania
1:35 pm-2:00	Applied Taichi technique in Acupuncture Needling Skills: A case study on Lyme knee arthritis	Dong Liu (David), PhD Georgian College Ontario, Canada
2:00 pm-2:25	Tai Chi and Hanna Somatic Education as Complementary Disciplines	John Loupos Jade Forest Kung Fu/ Tai Chi AND the Pain and Mobility Clinic, Cohasset, MA, USA
2:25 pm-2:50	The role of iMTQA during and Post COVID Pandemic	Byongsang Oh, PhD, Assoc. Professor, Faculty of Health and Medicine, University of Sydney, Australia CEO of iMTQA
2:50 pm-3:00	Closing remark	Albert Yeung, MD, ScD Assoc. Prof. Harvard Medical School Vice President, iMTQA

Please save the date

**iMTQA 2022 Conference will be held at
Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), Boston, MA
October 22-23, 2022**

Tai Chi for Treatment of Depression: A Randomized Trial



Albert Yeung, MD, ScD
Director of Primary
Care Research at the
Depression Clinical &
Research Program,
Massachusetts General
Hospital
Assoc. Prof.
Harvard Medical School

Background: A review of literature on the neurophysiological and psychological mechanisms of how tai chi can effect in mood regulation, and on the effectiveness of tai chi for treatment of depression. A randomized clinical trial was performed to examine the feasibility, safety, and efficacy of using tai chi for treating major depressive disorder (MDD). **Methods:** Sixty-seven Chinese Americans with MDD were randomized into 12 weeks' of tai chi intervention, education program, or waitlist. The key outcome measurement was the 17-item Hamilton Rating Scale for Depression (HAM-D₁₇); Positive response was defined as a decrease of 50% or more on the HAM-D₁₇, and remission was defined HAM-D₁₇ ≤ 7. Intent-to-treat analyses with last observations carried forward were performed. **Results:** Participants (N=67) were 71% female, mean age 54 (±13). 77% of participants completed the intervention and the post-treatment assessment; no serious adverse events were reported. The response rates were 41%, 57%, and 71% and remission rates were 35%, 43%, and 65% for the waitlisted group, education group, and the tai chi intervention group respectively. Compared to the waitlisted group, the tai chi group showed improved response (odds ratio [OR] 2.51 [95% CI, 1.11-5.70]), and a trend of improved remission (OR 2.02 [95% CI, 0.94-4.40]) after adjusting for age, gender, and baseline HAM-D₁₇ score. **Conclusion:** This study demonstrated that tai chi intervention was feasible, safe, and improved treatment response of Chinese American patients with MDD.

Albert Yeung is Director of Primary Care Research at the Depression Clinical and Research Program at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) and Associate Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. Dr. Yeung obtained his medical degree from National Taiwan University. He also obtained a Doctor of Science degree with a major in epidemiology from Harvard School of Public Health. He completed residency training in psychiatry at MGH. Dr. Yeung's major research interests include integrating primary care and mental health services to improve treatment of depression, mental health issues of under-served populations, and the use of complementary and alternative methods including acupuncture, tai chi, qigong, and mind body group intervention in treating anxiety and depressive disorders. He has authored or co-authored over 150 original articles, numerous book chapters, and two books: "Self-Management of Depression" and "The Science of Stress."

Modernizing Tai Chi and Qigong for Health



Paul Lam, MD

Director of Tai Chi for Health Institute, Australia

Paul Lam, a retired family physician in Sydney, Australia, is the director of Tai Chi for Health Institute. He has created a number of Tai Chi for Health programs that have improved the health and wellness of millions of people. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention(CDC.gov), National Council on Aging and Arthritis Foundation around the world support his Programs. He is one of the most respected tai chi teachers having trained thousands of instructors. Dr Lam has authored several books including Teaching Tai Chi Effectively, Tai Chi for Diabetes, Overcoming Arthritis and Tai Chi for Beginners and the 24 Forms. His instructional online lessons and DVDs are best sellers around the world.

Tai Chi and Qigong have evolved with the changing needs of society. The modern scientific knowledge can enhance the dissemination of tai chi and qigong. It will enable us to reach more people and to improve health more effectively. There are three major areas to modernize: Tai Chi Skill, Teaching skill and Safety Measures.

Tai Chi Skill: There are over 1,000 medical studies on the health benefits of tai chi and qigong such as improving immunity, relieving pain, reducing stress and preventing falls. These studies show how tai chi and qigong work. For example, the mindfulness training relieves stress and improve wellness, the weight transference improves balance and reduces falls. These knowledges enable us to re-organize tai chi sets to create shorter and more health orientated ones. They are easier to learn and deliver health benefits more quickly. Clearly medical research enhances the health-giving quality of tai chi.

Teaching methodology: An immense amount of research was done on how people learn best that can be applied to teaching tai chi and qigong. Generally speaking, a learner orientated approach will not only make learning tai chi and qigong easier, but also more enjoyable. Accessibility and enjoyment are two keys to better compliance. Based on the evidence and our experience, Tai Chi for Health Institute has constructed a unique Stepwise Progressive Teaching Method. It is practical and comprehensive. Over 30 medical studies on our programs with instructors trained with this method have proven its efficacy.

Teaching Safely: Sport medicine's research brought clearer understanding to the risk of injury for different exercises. Applying these to tai chi and qigong, we have reduced the risk of injury. Appropriate modification from our team have reduced this risk. Based on the evidence and our knowledge, we have set up a safety protocol for teaching Tai Chi and qigong. Again, over 30 studies have proven its efficacy.

Implementation: All our Tai Chi for Health programs have been applied to various populations with health problems, focusing effective teaching methods and safety protocols.

Conclusion: Tai chi is an art with great depth and immense potential for healing. To convert its main use as a martial art for the elites to a tool to empower more people requires modernization. Our mutual goal is to teach Tai Chi and Qigong to people with health conditions effectively and safely, and it would be worthy of significant effort to get there.

The effect of Tai Chi on Mobility for stroke survivors: Systematic Review and Meta-analysis



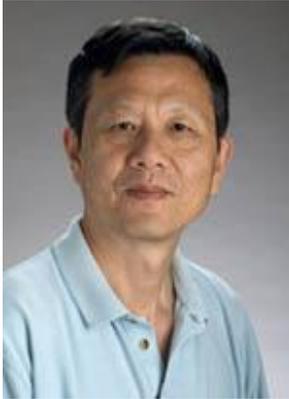
Rhayun Song RN, PhD

Professor, College of Nursing
Chungnam National University,
South Korea

Rhayun Song is the Dean and professor of College of Nursing at Chungnam National University, Korea. Dr. Song has been involved in Tai Chi related research since 2004 to explore the effect and mechanisms of Tai Chi intervention for various population with chronic disease, publishing more than 30 research papers. Dr. Song is the certified Master Trainer of Tai Chi for Health programs as the member of Tai Chi for Health Institute (TCHI), and currently a director of Tai Chi for Health Education and Research Center at Chungnam National University, College of Nursing.

Objective: Using a meta-analytic approach and incorporating a number of recent clinical trials not included in previous reviews, this study aimed to systematically examine the specific properties of Tai Chi and Qigong (TCQ) as an effective intervention to improve mobility of stroke survivors, and quantify the effects of TCQ on walking ability, dynamic balance, and activities of daily living using subgroup analysis. **Methods:** A systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials was conducted to examine the effects of TCQ on mobility in stroke survivors. Two research teams independently searched 16 electronic databases in English, Korean, and Chinese from their inceptions to October 2020. Methodological quality was assessed using the Cochrane Risk of Bias 2.0. Comprehensive Meta-analysis v. 3.0 program was used to combine effect size and to assess heterogeneity and publication bias. **Results:** Thirty randomized trials (22 with Tai Chi and 8 with Qigong) with stroke survivors (n=2,146) were included in the meta-analysis. The domain level judgements of risk of bias were low risk of bias (23.3%) and some concerns (76.7%) of studies. Meta-analysis of 30 RCTs with random effect model indicated that TCQ was effective to improve mobility (Hedges's $g=0.66$, 95% CI 0.38 to 0.97, 95% PI= -0.86, 2.18). The effects of TCQ remained significant for both short-term and long-term programs, and when compared with the active controls. **Conclusion:** The TCQ was effective to improve walking ability, dynamic balance, and activities of daily living for stroke survivors when applied for 12 weeks or less and compared with other interventions. Further studies are warranted to validate the effect of TCQ on specific mobility related outcomes in order to identify the standardized protocol of applying TCQ to improve mobility in this population.

Qigong exercise in people with fibromyalgia – ready for a needed implementation trial



Wen Liu, Ph.D.

Professor, Director of Neuromuscular Research Laboratory, Department of Physical Therapy & Rehabilitation Science, University of Kansas Medical Center

Wen Liu completed his PhD at Drexel University in Philadelphia and postdoctoral trainings at University of Calgary and Boston University. He is currently an Associate Professor and the Director of Neuromuscular Research Laboratory in the Department of Physical Therapy, Rehabilitation Science, & Athletic Training at University of Kansas Medical Center. He and his team has published more than 90 research articles in peer-reviewed journals. He has been awarded research grants from NIH, NSF, American Heart Association, Microsoft Inc., and other private funding agencies. Dr. Liu has been a member of various grant review panels of NIH, NSF, DOD, VA, and NIDILRR. In the last 15 years, he and his team have worked multiple research projects on the medical acupuncture and Qigong exercise in people with stroke, chronic pain, Parkinson's disease, and cancer

Purpose: To examine the efficacy of a Qigong exercise on primary outcomes of fibromyalgia (FM). **Methods:** We conducted a randomized clinical efficacy trial of “Six Healing Sounds” Qigong exercise in adults diagnosed with FM. In our study, 59 participants with FM were randomly assigned into a Qigong intervention group or a sham Qigong control group. Forty-six of them (n=22 in the Qigong group and n=24 in the sham control group) completed the 8-week intervention and pre/post-intervention assessments. A set of subject assessment tools was used in the subject assessment including questionnaires on pain, fatigue, FM impact and sleep quality. Additional measurements of serum level of cytokines of IL-6, IL-8, and IL-10 were taken in a portion of the participants. **Results:** The results of this study showed significant better outcomes in pain, fatigue, FM impact, and sleep quality in the Qigong group than the sham control group, with effect size of 0.97, 0.52, 0.71, and 0.72 for pain, fatigue, FM impact, and sleep quality, respectively. In addition, our data showed a significant decrease in resting level of IL-6 after the Qigong exercise.

Discussion and summary: Several clinical trials including this study have proved the efficacy of Qigong exercises in managing major symptoms of FM. In addition, the significant decrease in the resting level of IL-6 after the Qigong exercise may indicate the involvement of inflammatory pathway. The field now needs and is ready for implementation trials to explore potential solutions for practical issues related to clinical application of Qigong exercises in people with FM, such as the selection of specific Qigong exercises, monitoring the fidelity of Qigong practice, training the participants, etc. contribution to discipline: Our efficacy trial results demonstrate the potential effect of Six Healing Sounds Qigong exercise as a holistic approach for people with fibromyalgia.

The Efficacy of a Qigong Program on Serum Levels of IL-6, IL-8 and IL-10 and Pain Post-High Intensity Exercise in Patients with Fibromyalgia



Caio Sarmento, PT, PhD
Assistant Professor
Department of
Physical Therapy
California State University,
Fresno

Sarmento is an assistant professor in the Department of Physical Therapy at California State University.

He has been studying chronic pain in patients with fibromyalgia by examining their inflammatory responses due to mind-body interventions and aerobic exercise. His current research focuses on examining the effects of non-pharmacological interventions for patients with fibromyalgia and non-specific chronic low back pain

Purpose: Previous studies have shown that individuals with fibromyalgia (FM) may benefit from moderate to high-intensity exercises (MHIE). However, studies have also shown that individuals with FM may present with a blunted inflammatory response post-MHIE and exacerbated pain, impacting the compliance and adherence to exercise programs. Qigong exercise is effective in suppressing pain in individuals with FM. However, the underlying mechanisms of Qigong exercise involved in pain suppression are unknown. This study aimed to examine whether Qigong exercise can regulate the inflammatory response to high-intensity exercise (HIE) in individuals with FM preventing the participants from experiencing exacerbated pain levels post-HIE. **Methods:** 26 participants diagnosed with FM were submitted to a bout of HIE on a recumbent bicycle machine. During the HIE, blood was collected at 3-time points (pre-exercise, peak of exercise, and 1-hour post-exercise). The primary outcomes were pain intensity post-HIE, assessed by a Visual Analog Scale (VAS 1-10), and serum levels of IL-10, IL-8, and IL-6 measured using a multiplex assay. After the HIE test, participants were randomly assigned into two groups: experimental (Qigong) or control (sham-qigong). Both groups practiced the interventions 2 times per day for 10-weeks and repeated the HIE test at the end of the study. **Results:** Nineteen participants completed the 10-week intervention program. They were randomly assigned into an experimental group (n=10, mean age 42.6 ± 10.7 years, and FM duration 12.5 ± 4.7 years) or a control group (n=9, mean age 54.5 ± 11.9 years, and FM duration 13.3 ± 4.7 years). The mean change from pre- to peak and post-HIE for IL-6, IL-8, and IL-10 shows no significant difference between groups ($p > 0.05$). However, there was a significant reduction in pre-HIE IL-6 serum concentration between baseline and post-intervention evaluations in the experimental group ($p < 0.03$). **Conclusions:** Qigong exercise did not remediate the inflammatory response to a bout of HIE. However, participants in the Qigong exercise group experienced a significant reduction in resting pain and IL-6 levels at the end of the Qigong program.

Unique Physiological Effects of Tai Chi Compared to Aerobic Exercise: Implications for Chronic Conditions

Background: During a study on the effects of a health focused form of tai chi on blood oxygen saturation (SpO₂), large momentary drops as low as 84% SpO₂ were observed following practice. The normal range for SpO₂ is 95-100%. The current study was conducted to determine if this was a statistically significant drop, and how SpO₂ levels compared to an aerobic activity such as running, in pre, concurrent, and post measurements, as well as implications for chronic conditions. **Results:** Measurements of SpO₂ before, during, and after tai chi resulted in a statistically significant increase in SpO₂ during tai chi ($p = 1.69e-06$), and a statistically significant ($p = 1.71e-06$) brief momentary drop from resting levels, as low as 87% SpO₂ in the current study. A tingling in the hands was also reported, which may reflect enhanced oxygen diffusion, as well as an increase in SpO₂ during practice. Running showed no significant change in pre and post levels, with a significant change and decrease in SpO₂ during running ($p = 1.1e-08$), suggesting increased oxygen use by the large muscle groups during aerobic exercise. SpO₂ returned to normal resting levels following running, with no post drop. **Conclusion:** Results suggest that the increase in SpO₂ during tai chi, and the large momentary drop following tai chi, coupled with a potential increase in oxygen diffusion, may indicate enhanced oxygen metabolism during tai chi compared to aerobic exercise, with a potential effect on hypoxic (oxygen deficient) areas of the body. Theory is presented suggesting a potential direct and unique effect of tai chi practice on enhanced blood oxygen saturation, diffusion, and oxygen metabolism during practice, compared to aerobic forms of exercise. A theory of metarobic (alt. metaerobic) effects is proposed, related to enhanced oxygen metabolism, which may explain reported benefits of tai chi for conditions complicated by hypoxia, including cancer, cardiopulmonary disease (COPD), immunity, chronic pain, and arthritis.

Pete Anthony “Tony” Gryffin, PhD, MS, is an educator and researcher with an extensive background in mindful exercise, including over 30 years of experience in tai chi, qigong and traditional kung fu. His award-winning book "Mindful Exercise: Metarobics, Healing, and the Power of Tai Chi" has received powerful reviews from leaders in the field. He was an Alumni Fellow at the University of Florida, where the focus of his work was on mindfulness and health. During his ten years teaching at Fullerton College, Dr. Gryffin developed eight new courses oriented around wilderness experiences and mindful exercise for the health of mind and body. Currently he is an Assistant Professor of Integrated Health Sciences at the University of Montana – Northern.



**Pete Anthony Gryffin,
PhD, MS**

Assistant Professor
of Integrated Health
Sciences
at the University of
Montana – Northern

Medical Tai Chi & Qigong as Effective Trauma-Sensitive Practices

The National Council on Behavioral Health estimates that 70% of all Americans, 223 million people, have experienced significant trauma at least once in their lives. Trauma, whether deemed psychological, emotional, or physical has been definitively linked to significantly increased rates of chronic diseases including COPD, Heart Disease, chronic pain, chronic fatigue, anxiety, and depression, as well as statistically decreased work performance. Regardless of degree, past trauma experiences play a pivotal role in a person’s capacity to effectively engage and succeed in physical rehabilitation and disease recovery.

Qigong & Tai Chi are often touted as more gentle and holistic paths to healing, but are they truly more trauma-informed and trauma-sensitive in and of themselves? Not necessarily, and it’s been shown that mindfulness practices such as Qigong & Tai Chi can at times re-activate trauma responses in certain individuals. This session will review the key principles of Trauma-Informed programs as well as highlight the foundational skills associated with making medical Tai Chi and Qigong effective trauma-sensitive practices.

As medical professionals, the likelihood that we are treating clients with undiagnosed yet significant trauma right now is practically guaranteed. In front of us is an opportunity to both become more inclusive in our treatment approaches regardless of diagnosis as well ensure that applying medical Qigong & Tai Chi practices are safe and effective for everyone.

Brian Trzaskos, PT, LMT, CSCS, CMP, MI-C, is the president of NEW Health Inc. and director of the Institute for Rehabilitative Qigong & Tai Chi, which specializes in the integration of western body-mind science and the ancient healing arts of Qigong & Tai Chi. As a Physical Therapist and student of eastern movement and meditation practices for over two decades, Brian holds advanced certifications in both Western and Eastern healing arts. He was trained at the world renowned Craig Hospital in Denver, CO and earned his degree in Physical Therapy from the State University of New York at Buffalo.



**Brian Trzaskos, PT, LMT, CSCS,
CMP, MI-C**
Institute for Rehabilitative Qigong &
Tai Chi Willsboro NY

Collaborative Integrative Medicine Research Agenda in Healthcare

Purpose: The purpose of the workshop is to give attendees a strong understanding of a collaborative integrative medicine research agenda that would take us one step closer to a change in Standard of Care in order to remove an obstacle to implementing and prescribing integrative healthcare practices.

Background of the state of the Integrative Health research, current obstacles to Integrative Health research, definition of Integrative Health research, influence of groups from which consensus is required and the relationship of research with that collaborative group, Iterative and interactive development of the components for a collaborative research agenda which may include taxonomy, theoretical foundations, rigor, experimental design, methods for randomization and control, treatment descriptions, meta-analysis, economic evaluation methods, technologies, funding, distribution of research, and development of collaborative coalitions. Design characteristic, comparison of existing studies, practical activities to discern collaborative research characteristics, example study design complying with research agenda.

Conclusion: Getting researchers working together in concert with high-quality clinical studies based upon a theoretical framework and a common taxonomy is essential to expanding the ability of practitioners to make a solid well-proven case for Integrative Health for insurance companies, organizations publishing Standard of Care guidelines, physicians, health providers, policy organizations, patients and families. This talk will discuss all the necessary components and interactively develop a research agenda that will move all collaborative groups toward that goal.



CJ Rhoads, D. Ed
Professor, Kutztown
University, Pennsylvania

CJ Rhoads is a Professor in the College of Business at Kutztown University. Her research interests include leadership development, business strategy, entrepreneurship, healthcare cost management, newly developed educational technologies, and integrative health practices. She is a highly sought-after speaker, author, and consultant on business strategy, leadership, healthcare and technology topics. She is also both the Managing Director of HPL 501c3 Institute, a non-profit organization dedicated to sharing health, prosperity, and leadership for everyone, everywhere, and the CEO of a firm developing technology tools for non-profits, HPL Consortium, Inc. Before joining KU, her thirty five years of business experience runs the gamut from entrepreneurial startups in the technology industry to being Vice President in established Fortune 500 companies in the finance industry. She is a widely published author with ten books and over 250 articles. She received her D.Ed. in Educational Technology with a minor in Business Administration from Lehigh University, and her M.Ed. from Temple University in Educational Psychology focusing on Instructional Design.

Applied Taichi technique in Acupuncture Needling Skills: A case study on Lyme knee arthritis



David Dong Liu, PhD
Professor at Georgian college
Ontario, Canada

Taichi has eight fundamental techniques: Four Cardinal techniques (四正手: Péng, Expanding; Lǚ Deflecting; Jǐ Pressing and Àn Pushing), and Four Ordinal techniques (四隅手 Cǎi Plucking, Liè, Splitting, Zhǒu Elbow Strike and Kào Shoulder Strike). Although the current disciplines of Taichi and acupuncture are considered distinct, the culture and practice of both Taichi and acupuncture are integrated. The purpose of this presentation is to explain how to incorporate Taichi techniques into acupuncture needling skills training using a case study involving Lyme knee arthritis.

David Dong Liu is a professor at Georgian college's Acupuncture program, Ontario Canada. In 2017/18/19, David became a member of the Neurosciences Initiative Steering Committee. He has been teaching and practicing TaiChi, Qigong, Acupuncture and functional rehabilitation exercises for over 20 years. David is active in research, focusing on the use of acupuncture to manage pain and the use of TaiChi to promote mindfulness and physical wellbeing in community. David enjoys practicing TaiChi and has competed both in Toronto national and International TaiChi championships. David's commitment and passion for Qigong, TaiChi, acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) earned him the Toronto International Award for Acupuncture Development and Contribution Canada in October 2018.

Tai Chi and Hanna Somatic Education as Complementary Disciplines



John Loupos, MS, C.H.S.E.

Jade Forest Kung Fu/ Tai Chi AND
the Pain and Mobility Clinic,
Cohasset, MA, USA

John Loupos, M.S., C.H.S.E. owns the Jade Forest Kung Fu/ Tai Chi training facility and the Pain and Mobility Clinic in Cohasset, Ma. He has an extensive background in martial arts dating back to 1966, and has been training at Tai Chi Chuan since 1974. His specializations include Yang style Tai Chi and Liu He Ba Fa, as well as various meditation and qigong practices. John is also a Certified Hanna Somatic Educator and serves as a member of the Board of Directors for the Association for Hanna Somatic Education. John has written several books on Tai Chi Chuan and on Somatics along with other learning media and has been widely published in magazines and trade journals. His most recent book was "The Sustainable You - Somatics & the Myth of Aging."

Tai Chi, for all its inherent merits, can be much enhanced by certain auxiliary practices. One such practice is Hanna Somatic Education (aka Somatics, or HSE). Tai Chi Chuan and Hanna Somatic Education stem from very different cultures, yet share many features in common. Tai Chi Chuan and Somatics both emphasize mindful movement, i.e. movement that is slow, deliberate, and purposeful. Both place a high value on self-sensing, on ergonomically correct posture, on movement that is optimally efficient, and on a healthy mental state that is conducive to self-actualization and personal freedom. Several of these features qualify under the rubric of *interoception*, which describes a profound state of first person attention to and awareness of one's body. Interoception is mostly implicit during Tai Chi practice. However, interoception is an explicit and primary feature of Hanna Somatics.

Students at Tai Chi all too often arrive with bodies that are encumbered by the effects of injuries, stress, or other debilitation that is often misattributed as aged-related decline. Similar states of decline are described in the Somatics lexicon as being due to the *myth of aging*. While it is a de facto truth that bodies decline as people get older – hence the myth – much of the functional decline that people experience is not due to aging, as such, but rather to the cumulative effects of what I call the *archeology of insults*. That is, for many people the great bulk of neuromuscular decline is a learned response to the various physical and mental insults that they encounter as they move through their lives. A limiting effect of such insults is to incrementally compromise the efficiency of the sensorimotor pathways so that muscular control and performance becomes progressively less differentiated. Hanna Somatics is specifically designed to undo the effects of this decline by recorticalizing sensorial awareness and control of voluntary muscles for greater freedom overall. While I see Tai Chi as being highly compatible with Hanna Somatics, I see Somatics as being of tremendous value to those who practice at Tai Chi.

Role of the iMTQA During and Post COVID Pandemic



Byeongsang Oh, PhD
Associate Professor,
Faculty of Medicine and Health,
University of Sydney

Byeongsang Oh is an Associate Professor at Faculty of Medicine and Health, University of Sydney, an integrative oncology consultant at the Northern Sydney Cancer Centre, Royal North Shore Hospital (RNSH) and GenesisCare, Mater Hospital, a previous Research fellow at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Harvard Medical School (HMS), CEO of the International Medical Tai Chi Qigong Association (iMTQA), USA and a member of the Society for Integrative Oncology (SIO). Since 2006, Dr Oh has been collaborating in several research projects with the Harvard Medical School, Yale University and Arizona State University.

Main research area of interest: Microbiome in cancer, integrative oncology, and mind-body medicine

In the past two decades, several Tai Chi and Qigong (TQ) studies have demonstrated that TQ can improve immune function and reduce inflammation in people with multiple medical symptoms. Current evidence suggests that TQ practice can enhance both physical and psychological well-being including anxiety, depression, insomnia, arthritis, asthma, cardiopulmonary disease, cancer, dementia, diabetes, hypertension, pain, fatigue and other medical conditions. The outbreak of the COVID 19 pandemic, worldwide, has led to an increase in awareness of public health issues and prevention of disease. Strategies such as vaccination, lockdown and early screening of medical symptoms have been introduced in most countries to prevent disease and promote public health, with a commensurate increase in the popularity of health and well-being programs. To meet the fast-growing market demand of well-being programs, including TQ, run by community groups, corporate and healthcare institutions, the iMTQA and healthcare professional bodies recognize the *importance* of qualified TQ instructors to teach TQ safely and effectively. Considering that there are several different TQ styles and schools, the iMTQA consulted widely and defined accreditation standard guidelines for Medical Tai Chi Qigong instructors/teachers (MTQA) and for training institutions. This included collaborating with health professionals, integrative medicine academics, Tai Chi and Qigong master instructors, consumers and public safety officers from several countries such as Australia, Canada, China, Germany, Italy, Korea, Sweden, UK and USA. In this conference presentation, the vital role of the iMTQA during and after the pandemic era and the benefits of iMTQA membership will be discussed.