

# Application Status and Future Prospects of Traditional Chinese Medicine Nursing Technology

Dan Wang\*

No.1 Orthopedics Hospital of Chengdu, Chengdu 610073, Sichuan Province, China

\*Corresponding author: Dan Wang, Xiaodudu\_168@163.com

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**Abstract:** In recent years, the nursing technology of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) has developed rapidly in the country. TCM nursing technology mainly refers to the application of TCM therapy in clinical nursing practice, such as acupoint massage, cupping, ear point pressure beans, scraping, wet compress of traditional Chinese medicine, etc. Its application can not only effectively reduce the pain of patients, but also can promote the treatment effect, help patients recover early, but also help to further improve the quality of service of nursing staff. In clinical nursing practice, however, the application of TCM nursing technology still has some problems, such as the theory of traditional Chinese medicine nursing quality to promote, “Internet + TCM nursing” is still in the exploratory stage, etc. This article mainly discusses the application status and existing problems of Chinese medicine nursing technique, coping strategies and its future prospects for related analysis and research, hope to be able to improve the quality of TCM nursing technology application in China to provide some reference and reference.

**Keywords:** Traditional Chinese medicine nursing technology; Application status; Future prospects

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## 1. Introduction

With the continuous development of medical technology level in the country, there is a higher requirement for nursing service. Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) nursing technology has a long history, broad and profound, and it has gradually attracted more people’s attention by virtue of its unique advantages and treatment characteristics. It is precisely because of this, in recent years, the hospitals of TCM have paid more and more attention to the application and promotion of TCM nursing technology, in order to promote the official entry of TCM nursing into an important stage of prosperity and vigorous development, so as to provide a wider range of support for the development of China’s medical and nursing cause.

## **2. Analysis of the application status of traditional Chinese medicine nursing technology**

### **2.1. The guidance of national policies**

In terms of national policy guidance, China's Health Commission issued relevant documents on the "11th Five-Year Plan," "12th Five-Year Plan" and "13th Five-Year Plan" of nursing development, respectively, and clarified the development direction and key tasks of nursing work in China in the future <sup>[1]</sup>. As an important part of medical and nursing work, traditional Chinese medicine nursing is naturally included in it. In addition, in order to further promote the promotion and application of TCM nursing technology, China has also issued policy documents such as the National Nursing Development Plan (2016–2020), the Opinions of the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine on Strengthening the Nursing work of Traditional Chinese Medicine, and the Notice on the Issuance of Guidance on Promoting the Reform and Development of nursing service industry <sup>[2]</sup>. Under the guidance of these policy documents, TCM nursing technology has been significantly developed in China, and the clinical application effect of TCM nursing technology has also been significantly improved.

### **2.2. The connotation construction of TCM nursing technology**

From building up the connotation of traditional Chinese medicine nursing technique in the medical field in China has been developing rapidly, the main performance are as follows. First, with the implementation of the scheme in the clinical practice of TCM nursing, the clinical application of the Chinese medicine nursing technique project presents a trend of increasing year by year. Second, with the assistance and support of characteristic nursing clinic and information technology platform, the application scope of TCM nursing technology has been expanded, and the service object has been expanded from inpatients to outpatients. Moreover, the application of TCM nursing technology can greatly improve the non-drug treatment effect, and better realize the complementarity of doctors and nurses. Thirdly, some relevant studies have found that for the treatment of a certain disease, the treatment effect of combined use of multiple TCM nursing technologies is better than the treatment effect of only using a certain TCM nursing technology <sup>[3]</sup>. Therefore, at present, many institutions and related nursing staff pay more and more attention to the combined application of multiple TCM nursing techniques.

## **3. The problems existing in the application of traditional Chinese medicine nursing technology**

### **3.1. The connotation of TCM nursing is not clear**

As the saying goes, "Doctors and nurses do not separate from each other." At present, traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) nursing technology is used in many clinical work in the country. Nursing is the result of traditional Chinese medicine of traditional Chinese medicine, it spun off as an independent discipline from medicine development time is relatively short, so, at present, the construction of the discipline system is still in the important exploration stage <sup>[4]</sup>. On the whole, the current application of TCM nursing technology in China still has the problem of unclear connotation construction of TCM nursing discipline, which will not only affect the application effect of TCM nursing technology to a certain extent but also make the implementation scope of TCM nursing technology unclear, which is not conducive to the development of clinical nursing

work. On the one hand, although the technical manual of TCM nursing staff currently has 18 common clinical nursing technical operation standards, the implementation process of TCM has made a more clearly defined [5]. However, in the actual clinical nursing practice, the content and types of TCM nursing techniques used by nursing staff are often far beyond these ranges. It can be seen that the types, implementation scope and practice process of TCM nursing technology need to be further explored. On the other hand, clinical practice can find that traditional Chinese medicine medical technology and traditional Chinese medicine nursing technology will have a certain “overlap” part, which easily leads to the medical staff’s understanding of the application of technology is not comprehensive and unified enough [6]. Moreover, in addition to the busy clinical work and the lack of communication between medical staff, it is easy to lead to the debate of “whether the TCM nursing technology is suitable for doctors or nurses to operate,” which will also restrict the application and development of TCM nursing technology in clinical practice [7].

### **3.2. The theoretical literacy of TCM of nursing staff needs to be improved**

In 2015, TCM nurses were included in the Occupational Classification of the People’s Republic of China document for the first time as a profession [8]. However, up to now, there are still some problems in the clinical work of China, such as the shortage of TCM nurses, and the quality of personnel needs to be improved. Xie Jun *et al.* (2021) conducted a relevant investigation and research on the “knowledge, attitude and practice” of nurses in TCM hospitals [9]. The results showed that most of the nursing staff had not received professional TCM nursing education background, and only 20.31% of the nursing staff had the first degree of TCM nursing. In addition, although many hospitals have increased the training efforts of TCM nursing skills for nursing staff, the training and assessment of some hospitals focus more on the operation process of TCM nursing skills, but ignore the systematic training of theoretical knowledge, and then there will be a problem of “can’t do it or not use it.” Nursing staff will be on the model according to the process operation, but not used in clinical practice. It can be seen that the theoretical literacy of TCM of nursing staff needs to be further improved.

### **3.3. “Internet + TCM nursing” is still in the exploratory stage**

In 2019, the relevant departments of China issued the “Internet + Nursing Service” pilot work plan [10]. The document elaborated on the connotation of “Internet + Nursing Service,” which refers to the nursing service provided by medical institutions for discharged patients or special people suffering from diseases and mobility difficulties through “online application + offline service” based on the Internet and the use of nursing staff registered in the institution [11]. After the release of this document, China has successively identified Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Guangdong, Zhejiang, Jiangsu and other provinces and cities as the pilot provinces and cities of “Internet + Nursing Service” [12]. However, from the current development situation, “Internet + Nursing Service” is still in an important stage of exploration, and its performance is mainly reflected in two aspects. First, the service model is still based on meeting social needs as the basic premise. Second, the survival and development of this model still need to be further explored, such as the reassessment of service value positioning, the redefinition of the ability of nursing staff in offline services, the standardized management of offline services, and the construction and optimization of online service data platforms [13]. However, in the new nursing model of “Internet + Nursing Service,” how to give full play to the advantages of traditional Chinese medicine nursing technology and apply it to home care and continuous care remains to be explored.

## **4. Effective countermeasures to improve the application of traditional Chinese medicine nursing technology**

### **4.1. Strengthen the development of disciplines and explore new management models**

In view of the above problems of unclear connotation of TCM nursing discipline, nurses need to strengthen the construction and research of TCM nursing discipline, and actively explore a new management model, so as to better publicize, promote and apply TCM nursing technology. For example, the nursing staff can according to their requirements and actual situation, according to the Gua Sha, cupping, different types of TCM nursing technology such as fumigation on the network to collect a large number of classical literature, and carry on the comb, to enrich their knowledge of Chinese medicine nursing theory. Considering that this work has a long way to go, relevant institutions need to strengthen the training of nursing staff's ability to sort out classical literature and provide them with corresponding support. If necessary, institutions can also cooperate with local government departments. Over time, nurses can gradually define the value orientation of TCM nursing, which is conducive to them giving full play to the advantages of TCM nursing technology and promoting the further development of TCM nursing. However, in this process, the relevant institutions also need to invite industry experts to guide nursing staff and help nursing staff to complete the discipline theory mining, data collation, literature research, expert demonstration and other work, to further clarify the application scope of TCM nursing technology.

In addition, in recent years, "medical cooperation" has now become a new type of work in the field of medical care model, to this, can try to set up institutional cooperation team, and actively organize the doctors and nurses to carry out a variety of health care integration activities, constructing the new management mode of medical integration, to achieve high-quality development of nursing science of traditional Chinese medicine to provide more protection.

### **4.2. Strengthen the construction of TCM nursing talent team and improve the TCM nursing literacy of clinical nurses**

Talent training is a major systematic project. In terms of cultivating TCM nursing talents, the Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine has set up the "National TCM Nursing Backbone Talent Training Project." Under the guidance of the national TCM nursing personnel training project, China's provinces, cities and regions have carried out the related backbone personnel training work, such as Beijing Municipal Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine launched the "Beijing's first batch of TCM nursing backbone personnel training project," aiming at cultivating TCM nursing backbone personnel. Zhejiang province has established the first training base of integrated traditional Chinese and Western medicine nursing specialist nurses in China<sup>[14]</sup>. For now, however, this training is largely limited in various provinces and cities in this hospital of TCM nursing backbone talents cultivation, and for other hospitals, most of the TCM in other parts of the nursing staff, its related training remains to be strengthened, the doctor of traditional Chinese medicine nursing thinking, ability and quality improvement. To this, relevant departments should use the Internet in China, big data and other modern technological means, for the various provinces and regions and the provision of hospital resources sharing platform, to other hospitals to cultivate TCM nursing personnel to provide more experience for reference, to achieve the purpose of improving clinical nursing staff of TCM nursing quality.

In addition, relevant institutions in the standardization of TCM nursing personnel training, to do well educational background, knowledge level and so on basic investigation work, and this basis the targeted training

and guidance to nursing staff. For example, for newly recruited nurses, relevant institutions can train them according to the relevant requirements and standards in the “Training Program for Newly Recruited Nurses in Traditional Chinese Medicine Hospitals (Trial).” For intermediate level nursing staff, relevant institutions can use the “workshop” method to train them and continuously improve their dialectical nursing ability. For high-level nursing staff, relevant institutions need to establish and improve the certification system of TCM nursing professional nurses as soon as possible, and cultivate their ability and quality according to the relevant system requirements and assessment standards, to cultivate more professional TCM nursing professional nurses.

### **4.3. Strengthen the informatization construction of traditional Chinese medicine nursing technology under big data**

With the continuous development of information technology, people have entered the era of big data, and strengthening the information construction of TCM nursing technology is bound to be an important direction for its future development. Therefore, ways to grasp the development opportunities and meet the challenges is an important topic worth thinking and exploring for various institutions and nursing staff. In this regard, relevant institutions and nursing staff in provinces, cities and regions should actively research and develop “Internet + Nursing Service” projects including TCM nursing services, and promote the construction of professional technology information of traditional Chinese medicine nursing, to better provide nursing services for the whole society. Taking “Internet + TCM nursing service” as an example, the project can include scraping, cupping, moxibustion, suspended moxibustion, acupoint application, hot ironing of Chinese medicine, auricular point sticking, massage, Chinese medicine painting, acupoint injection and many other TCM nursing technologies <sup>[15]</sup>.

## **5. The future prospects of traditional Chinese medicine nursing technology**

### **5.1. Promote the complementary advantages of TCM and Western medicine nursing technology**

Both traditional Chinese and Western medicine nursing technologies have their therapeutic advantages and nursing characteristics. Therefore, in the future development, traditional Chinese medicine nursing technology in clinical practice should actively absorb the new theories and new methods of modern Western medicine nursing disciplines, and selectively integrate dialectical nursing and holistic nursing according to their actual conditions, to achieve mutual penetration and complementary advantages of TCM and Western medicine nursing technologies. To do so, on the one hand, can effectively promote traditional modern nursing and nursing of TCM to realize multidisciplinary integration development, on the other hand also can provide patients with better care and treatment effect of traditional Chinese medicine.

### **5.2. Promoting TCM nursing to the community and to the international community**

At present, many diseases such as cervical spondylosis and lumbar disc herniation that cannot be effectively treated with Western medicine have been improved to a large extent after TCM treatment and nursing. Moreover, the country’s administration of TCM also especially stressed that to increase the towns and townships, community service centers of the TCM department of construction, to develop the community service center, promote the promotion and application of Chinese medicine nursing techniques. Nowadays, with

the continuous development of traditional Chinese medicine nursing techniques and applications, more people have begun to choose with care and treatment of traditional Chinese medicine. Therefore, to better absorb the advantages and experience of international nursing technology, further, expand the influence of TCM nursing technology, and promote the continuous development of TCM nursing technology, China also needs to promote TCM nursing to the community and the world, integrate more advanced nursing technology and experience into TCM nursing technology, to promote the exchange of international nursing.

## 6. Conclusion

In a word, TCM nursing technology has a wide range of applications and strong practicality. It has great advantages in prevention, health care, treatment and rehabilitation, and is worthy of promotion in the field of modern medicine. However, the experience of TCM nursing technology is accumulated and summarized in the historical medical practice of thousands of years in China. Moreover, under the background of the new era, it is also constantly forging ahead and developing to provide services for mankind. In this regard, it is necessary for TCM nursing staff, related institutions and researchers to actively participate in the research and promotion of TCM nursing technology, to contribute to the promotion of China's medical and nursing cause, to better benefit mankind.

## Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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