



Wellbeing Clinic Newsletter

Today's Focus:

DO YOU REALLY NEED AN OP?

This newsletter has been inspired by this article from BBC

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-68479414> which reveals the extent of the waiting times for an operation in the UK's hospitals, with the overall waiting list having "fallen slightly to 7.58 million" according to BBC at the time of writing.

So, do I really need an OP?

Given the difficult context depicted by BBC, the chances of a fast surgical intervention are highly variable and it appears that in many cases you may expect a long wait. So a natural question is whether an operation is really the only solution available?

Before we continue, please note that we do not intend to delay or dissuade anyone from seeking medical help they need. We understand that surgery is sometimes absolutely necessary and having a conventional medical background ourselves we are not "against" surgery or conventional medicine in general.

However, we also know that understanding of benefits that TCM can offer is often limited within the wider medical profession and many medical practitioners simply may not know that there are safe, viable and affordable alternatives to surgery. This may sometimes be the only reason why surgery is recommended as an "only" option. We believe that if such alternatives exist, you deserve to know about it to be able to make a fully informed decision about your own health.

You may be surprised to find out that there are many health conditions in which Traditional Chinese Medicine can provide a non-invasive but very effective alternative to an operation.

How TCM can help?

There are many conditions in which TCM methods, including acupuncture, herbal medication or other methods as appropriate for a given condition, can provide an effective alternative to an operation and may help to heal or at least effectively control the condition. Examples of such ailments where TCM is a great option include:

- Various back problems including sciatica, trapped nerves, scoliosis
- Some benign tumours
- Fibroids, ovarian cysts, fallopian tube blockages

- Pelvic organ prolapse
- Some neurological conditions including migraines

There are also several chronic conditions which, if untreated or allowed to deteriorate may lead to surgery becoming necessary in the longer term. Such conditions may be successfully controlled by TCM thus reducing the possibility of a surgery being needed.

Examples of such conditions are:

- Endometriosis
- Diabetes
- Various autoimmune diseases including MS, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Ankylosing Spondylitis

This list of examples above is far from being exhaustive. If you would like to know whether TCM can be helpful in your case, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

A few words about the risks

A surgery is not a "risk-free" or "easy" option and a very careful consideration should be given before deciding to undergo a surgery. Unfortunately cases of complications and even irreversible damage as a result of an error or malpractice during surgery are not unheard of and we would venture a hypothesis that when the healthcare resources are overstretched and overwhelmed, chances of something going badly wrong may be even higher. Some risks associated with certain types of surgery such as internal bleeding may be life threatening. Further possible risks of complications or side effects may be associated with the use of painkillers and other medications during or after surgery.

Opposed to the above, TCM is a fully natural and non-invasive solution in which risks of significant or irreversible damage or side effects are remote.

Additionally, surgery usually involves some convalescence time which can last from a few days to few weeks and even a few months in

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some more severe cases. During this time the patient may have a limited mobility and may require help of a nurse or a family member, being temporarily unable to look after themselves. This has obvious implications for the patient such as inability to work for an extended period of time, as well as for their family. Patients may also experience significant pain during the convalescence time, requiring use of strong painkillers.

TCM on the other hand does not normally involve any convalescence time at all. If the treatment is effective, improvement is achieved gradually with each treatment session and the symptoms such as pain or other discomforts simply decrease over time. Cases of temporary increase in pain shortly after treatment, especially during early phases of the treatment are possible in some conditions but are very rare. The TCM practitioner is usually able to warn you about such possibility as well as offer you suitable remedies to manage such pain if necessary.

It is also important to bear in mind that your body cannot really tell the difference between surgery and a traumatic injury such as for example a knife wound. Even putting the various risks and possible side effects aside, the benefits of an otherwise successful surgery may still come at a relatively high price. The body will need to expend significant amounts of energy to heal itself from the surgical wounds. This strain on the body may lead to some undesirable effects such as premature ageing or an overall health deterioration in the longer term. This is really something to consider especially in case of surgical procedures performed for no medical reasons such as cosmetic surgery.

There are also extremely unfortunate cases where the health problem is misdiagnosed by medical professionals leading to an unnecessary surgery. Such unnecessary procedure is obviously unlikely to help whilst still exposing the patient to the full range of risks and discomforts associated with a

surgical procedure. We have for example successfully treated someone who had been offered a hip replacement operation whilst in fact they were suffering from an advanced case of sciatica. Thankfully for this person a single TCM treatment session was enough to demonstrate that no hip replacement was necessary and the customer eventually achieved a full recovery, without surgery.

In TCM, a risk of accidental misdiagnosis is also very unlikely to lead to significant problems or life-changing consequences. Unlike in surgery where there is essentially only one chance of "getting it right", in TCM you can actually try whether the treatment works for you, without exposing yourself to significant risks. If the improvement is not achieved within the expected time or further information about the condition comes to light, the TCM treatment plan can simply be adjusted, hopefully leading to a better outcome.

At Wellbeing Clinic we only offer treatment if we are confident that there is a reasonable chance of it being beneficial, however in a rare scenario where the TCM treatment did not produce the expected improvement, the surgery option still remains open as a last resort.

TCM is best before surgery

Many people tend to come to see us seeking help for various post-surgery side effects and complications. Unfortunately such cases are relatively common and the extent of post-surgery damage in some of the cases we have seen is truly shocking.

Whilst we are always happy to help and we are usually still able to provide some welcome relief to such customers, this is really very sad, since so much more could have been done for them had they come to see us before the surgery. In many cases we see, the surgery with all its consequences could have been avoided altogether if such customers had the right TCM treatment for their condition.

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In a post-operation scenario unfortunately TCM treatment options become much more limited especially where damage caused by surgery is very serious or irreversible. In such situations the best that can be done is to try to ease the pain or control the symptoms but the prospects of full recovery are often no longer achievable at this stage. Sadly, even the best possible TCM treatment cannot regrow a disc which has been surgically removed or heal a nerve permanently damaged during surgery.

This is why we believe that surgery should be used with great caution, when absolutely necessary and after all other viable treatment options have been fully exhausted. It is also a very good idea to seek a second medical opinion to confirm that surgery is indeed the right treatment option for you and to fully understand the associated risks.

If you are interested in trying TCM, we strongly advise coming to see us before rather than after surgery. The chances are that you may no longer need the operation after all and you may free the space for someone else on the long waiting list, who may need it more than you.

Additionally, in cases where surgery is the best option, TCM may still be of great help as a support treatment, for example as a natural pain management method or a way to accelerate post-surgery recovery.

If you would like to know more, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

But I have already tried acupuncture and it didn't help....

We unfortunately see such comments frequently on social media and a word of explanation is highly necessary here.

Traditional Chinese Medicine, and in particular acupuncture, is not "magic" or "art" as some like to believe but a very sophisticated, complex professional skill, which takes a lot of time, hard work and most importantly, the right training and professional experience

opportunities to develop properly. Just as not everyone can play the piano to the same degree, not every therapist, even if formally "qualified", will be able to achieve the same therapeutic results. Sadly, not all alternative medicine professionals have access to the same level of training or clinical experience and it is possible in the UK to enter the profession of "acupuncturist" after a relatively short training without any medical background, which to a great extent explains the limited results. But just because not everyone can play the piano well, it does not "prove" that no-one can play it, or that it is impossible to play the piano at all, right? The same logic is true for TCM. If you find the right, suitably qualified and experienced TCM practitioner, you are likely to quickly see the difference. From our own experience, most customers see an improvement within a few treatment sessions, with a large proportion experiencing at least some improvement from the first session.

There may also be other possible reasons for unsatisfactory results. One of the most common which comes to mind is that TCM treatment requires some commitment from the patient too. Skipping treatment sessions or not taking remedies as prescribed inevitably leads to inferior results. However some people tend to take a more "relaxed" approach to a TCM treatment, in which way they contribute to undermining their own treatment results, perhaps because "alternative" or "traditional" doesn't sound as important and prestigious as "medical". But like it or not, just as with conventional medicine treatment, if you decided to undergo a TCM therapy and you wish to see the results, it is important to commit to it and follow the treatment plan. If you do, you may be amazed with the results.

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