



## Toward a new era of holistic integrative medicine

*“The all-round moderately prosperous society could not be achieved without people’s all-round health”*, President Xi Jinping said at a national meeting on health held on 19–20 August 2016. President Xi stressed that public health should be given priority in the country’s development strategy. We should make comprehensive efforts to promote healthy lifestyles, strengthen medical services and disease prevention, and develop health-related industries.

However, we doubt whether the modern medical system can realize China’s healthy dreams. Roy Porter, a medical historian, stated in *The Cambridge Illustrated History of Medicine* in 2000, “Never have people in the West lived so long, or been so healthy, and never have medical achievements been so great. Yet, paradoxically, rarely has medicine drawn such intense doubts and disapproval as today.” (1). Our answer is that we want an even longer life expectancy and healthier lives, which is unattainable with our existing medical system and our medical knowledge and technologies. The iatrogenic factors have become the third leading cause for overall mortality in American hospitals (2). Is it the doctors or medical system that should be blamed? All doctors are doing their best within the limitations imposed by current scientific approaches and their own knowledge, but concerted efforts do not necessarily result in positive or optimal treatment for patients. Sometimes, it may even lead to harmful results. The development of modern medicine is currently facing challenges because of the over-specialization and over-division of medical disciplines and the fragmentation of medical knowledge.

To construct a new medical system more suitable for human health and disease treatment, holistic integrative medicine (HIM) regards the human body as a holistic entity; organically integrates the most advanced knowledge and theories in each medical field and the most effective practices in various clinical specialties; and develops corresponding revisions and adjustments according to social, environmental, and psychological conditions (3,4). Proceeding from a holistic, integrated, and medical viewpoint, it looks at the human being as a whole and situates patients in a larger context, involving natural, social, psychological, and other factors. By converting the data and evidence obtained from medical research back into their original facts, transforming knowledge and consensus gained from clinical practice into experience, and consolidating techniques and arts discerned from clinical explorations into medical approaches, HIM takes shape through these repeated practices at the level of facts, experience, and medical approaches (5).

In the last summer, when the 2017 Chinese Congress of HIM closed, we were asked to be the guest editors of the *AME Medical Journal*’s special issue on HIM. Several doctors and experts explained their understanding and application of HIM from their own perspectives. We hope to play a role in attracting public attention and setting up some examples for professionals. In conclusion, we would like to end this editorial with a proverb: *“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”*

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