



International students at the Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine take a massage course. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Working toward global promotion of TCM

A traditional Chinese medicine college in Shanghai sparks passion

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With a serious interest in TCM, there are 1,500 foreign students at the university enrolled in long-term programs.

The Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine has vowed to boost the development of TCM education around the world where more than 180 countries and regions have adopted this medical style, according to Xu Jianguang, president of the university.

Established in 1956, the Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine is among the earliest four TCM colleges in China. Over the past few years, the university has made a series of contributions toward the development of TCM and talent cultivation.

"TCM is gaining wider recognition in the world as an increasing number of researchers have been winning global awards in recent years. This medical style is becoming more widely used across the world," says Xu.

He says the university has identified the globalization of TCM as the key to further developing the field.

As an important destination for international students to learn TCM, the university says the number of such students has been on the rise.

As of the end of 2016, there were more than 1,500 international students enrolled in long-term academic programs at the university, with 85 percent pursuing degree programs.

The number of international students who are studying for degree programs accounts for about 15 percent of the university's full-time students and more than 20 percent of its undergraduates are international students.

In 2016, the university conducted nearly 100 short-term training projects, such as international acupuncture training classes in Shanghai and summer schools for different language-speaking groups, including Chinese, English, French, Japanese and Korean. A total of 1,243 trainees took TCM-related training courses.

For the past four decades, the university has helped cultivate nearly 10,000 TCM doctors, acupuncturists and physical therapists for more than 100 countries and regions.

It has also established a global TCM center that aims to become an international platform for TCM consultation, research, international development by gathering high-level TCM talent from around the world.

In addition to opening courses such as "medical classics," "TCM Chinese writing" and

"common Shanghai dialect for clinical use," the university holds various events related to Chinese culture to create a favorable environment for international students to practice their Chinese.

With regard to expanding its global network and establishing international cooperation, the university has established a number of TCM education centers and tai chi health centers through partnerships with well-known overseas universities and organizations.

To promote TCM culture, the university organizes activities and events each year and has even published an English magazine titled TCM Culture. In addition to establishing overseas education bases and Confucius Institutes, the university also cooperates with various universities to jointly develop TCM courses.

The lack of international regulations has long been a concern in the industry. Over the years, the university has worked with global organizations to create international standards and it established an institute to work on TCM's international standardization.

"The international development of TCM is one of China's national strategies, and the international standardization of TCM is the foundation upon which to implement this strategy. Our university now works as a practice platform to serve the strategy," Xu says.

According to the university, it has started a new round of studies of TCM development in countries and regions involved in the Belt and Road Initiative.

"We will carry out a series of studies on hot topics, such as how TCM can be involved in the construction of an economic corridor in countries and regions taking part in the Belt and Road Initiative, how to exert the soft cultural power of TCM, how to serve the country's national strategy through TCM diplomacy, and how to form the evaluation system of TCM centers," Xu says.

Last year, the university completed the research project on TCM as part of the Belt and Road Initiative with the country's TCM authorities, and it proposed a series of development strategies including how the medical style can be integrated with the internet and how its culture can be further developed.

The university also participated in the drafting of the TCM Belt and Road development plan for the 2016-2020 period.

In early 2016, a TCM international development center was officially established at the university.

The center aims to be a professional think tank that serves the development of TCM culture and promote its integration into the Belt and Road Initiative.

E-cigarette study produces hazy results

LONDON — A British study into smoking and e-cigarette use among UK teenagers has produced mixed results, prompting scientists to caution against altering policy decisions or public health advice until evidence becomes clearer.

The research, published online in the British Medical Journal's specialized Tobacco Control journal on Aug 17, suggests there may be evidence e-cigarettes could be leading UK teenagers to try tobacco smoking. But the results do not fit with underlying smoking trends and drew criticism from external experts.

The findings show that among teenagers who at the start of the survey say they had never smoked cigarettes but had tried e-cigarettes, more than a third, or 34.4 percent, say a year later that they had tried cigarettes. This compared with only 9 percent in the group who had not tried e-cigarettes when the survey began.

Yet the study's researchers, led by Mark Conner of the University of Leeds, urge caution in interpreting its results, noting that while e-cigarette use has increased in Britain, rates of smoking have continued to fall.

"While acknowledging that a causal relationship may be plausible, we cannot confirm

“It simply shows that some teenagers who try an e-cigarette might go on to try tobacco.”

Linda Bauld, a professor of health policy at the University of Stirling

this based on our findings and the trends observed over the same period in the UK," they write.

"Given the lack of clarity regarding the mechanism linking e-cigarette and cigarette use, we need to be cautious in making policy recommendations based on our findings."

The global scientific community is divided over e-cigarettes and whether or not they are a useful public health tool as a nicotine-replacement therapy.

Many specialists, including health experts at Public Health England, think e-cigarettes, which contain nicotine but no tobacco, are a lower-risk alternative to smoking.

But the US surgeon general

last year urged lawmakers to impose price and tax policies that would discourage their use.

Robert West, a professor of health psychology at University College London, says Conner's team was right to warn that this latest study did not show a causal connection between e-cigarette use and starting smoking.

"It seems unlikely that e-cigarette use by young people is causing more of them to smoke, because smoking rates in this age group now are declining at least as fast as they were before e-cigarettes started to become popular," West says.

Linda Bauld, a professor of health policy at the University of Stirling, says the study did not provide evidence that using e-cigarettes causes young people to become smokers.

"It simply shows that some teenagers who try an e-cigarette might go on to try tobacco, and on both occasions it could be just once," she says.

"If e-cigarettes were causing smoking, then the steady decline in youth smoking we've seen in national surveys in recent years would be reversed. But it's not — smoking among young people in the UK is at an all-time low."

REUTERS

Cutting across cultures



Brazilian high schoolers learn the traditional Chinese art of paper-cutting in the country's first high school to use Chinese and Portuguese. The school, in Niteroi, was founded in 2015 by the State University of Campinas' Confucius Institute and the local government. It also teaches in English. The initial plan was to recruit 72 new students a year. But that changed to 130 because of strong demand, and 250 are currently enrolled.

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