



# Menopause

## Without Its Dreadful Syndrome ?

- An Alternative Perspective and Treatment From Traditional Chinese Medicine -

Presented by Aina Zhang and James Wang

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## Presentation Outline



- ❖ Credentials of Aina Zhang
- ❖ Definition and introduction to TCM
- ❖ Menopause without menopausal syndrome ? A TCM perspective
- ❖ Main menopausal symptoms and syndromes
- ❖ All about hot flashes
- ❖ Menopausal syndrome and TCM treatment
- ❖ Meridians, acupuncture and acupoints
- ❖ Menopausal syndrome and self-help
- ❖ Two clinical studies – acupuncture treatment for hot flashes
- ❖ The Advantages of treating menopausal syndrome with TCM
- ❖ Safety concerns of acupuncture and TCM herbs
- ❖ Myth and controversy about TCM
- ❖ Questions & answers



## Credentials of Aina Zhang

- ❖ Master's degree in Gynecology  
(1989, Guangzhou University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, China)
- ❖ M.D. degree in combined Chinese & Western Medicine  
(1982, Guangzhou University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, China)
- ❖ 25 years of clinical experience in TCM and Western Medicine  
(1<sup>st</sup> affiliated hospital of Guangzhou University of TCM, China & SinoCare)
- ❖ Licensed acupuncturist since 1995 (Quebec)
- ❖ Founder of the first TCM gynecology clinic in Quebec



# Guangzhou University of TCM



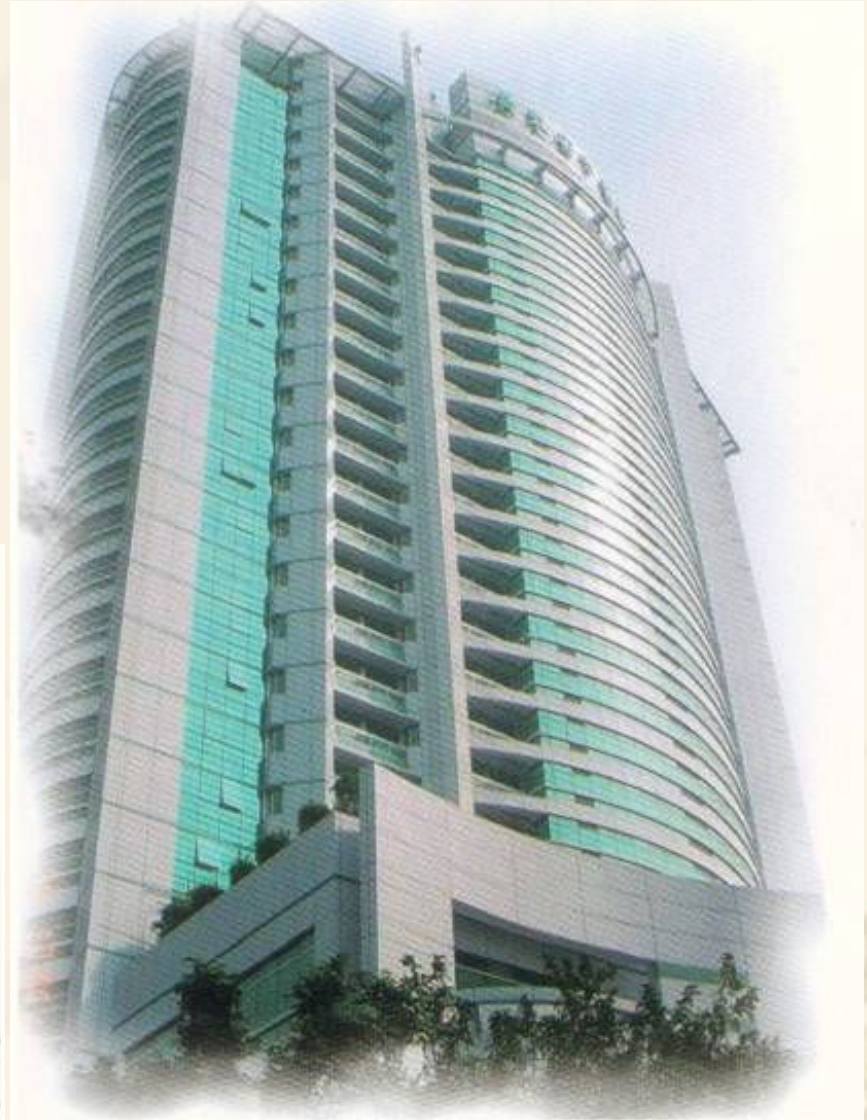
- ❖ Established in 1956, as one of the first four TCM national institutions
- ❖ One of the best & largest in China
- ❖ 500,000 M<sup>2</sup> of teaching facility
- ❖ Over 10, 000 of students



# Guangzhou University of TCM Affiliated Hospitals



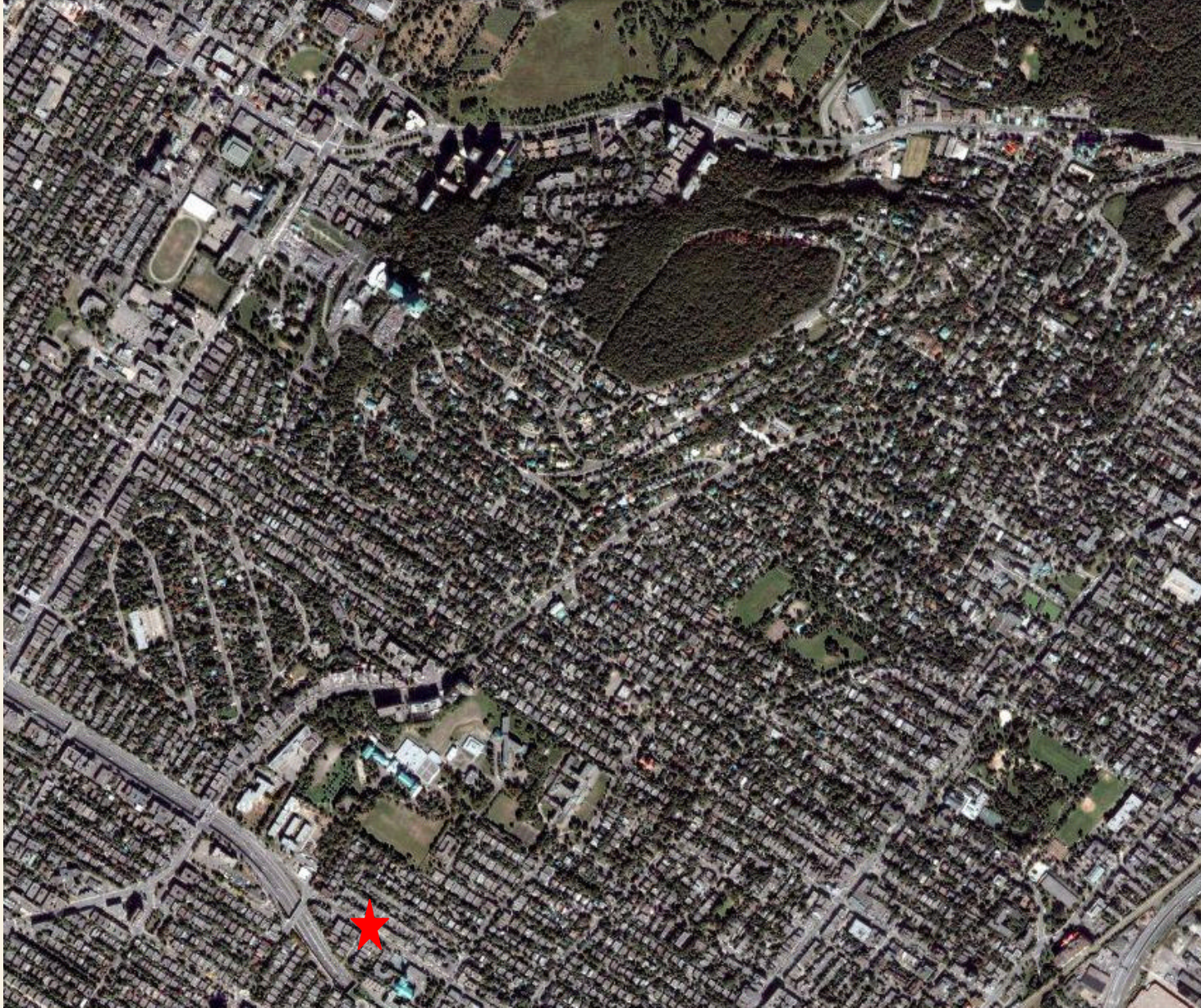
- ❖ 11 affiliated hospitals,
- ❖ 5000 hospital beds,
- ❖ 6 national, 8 provincial centers of research.



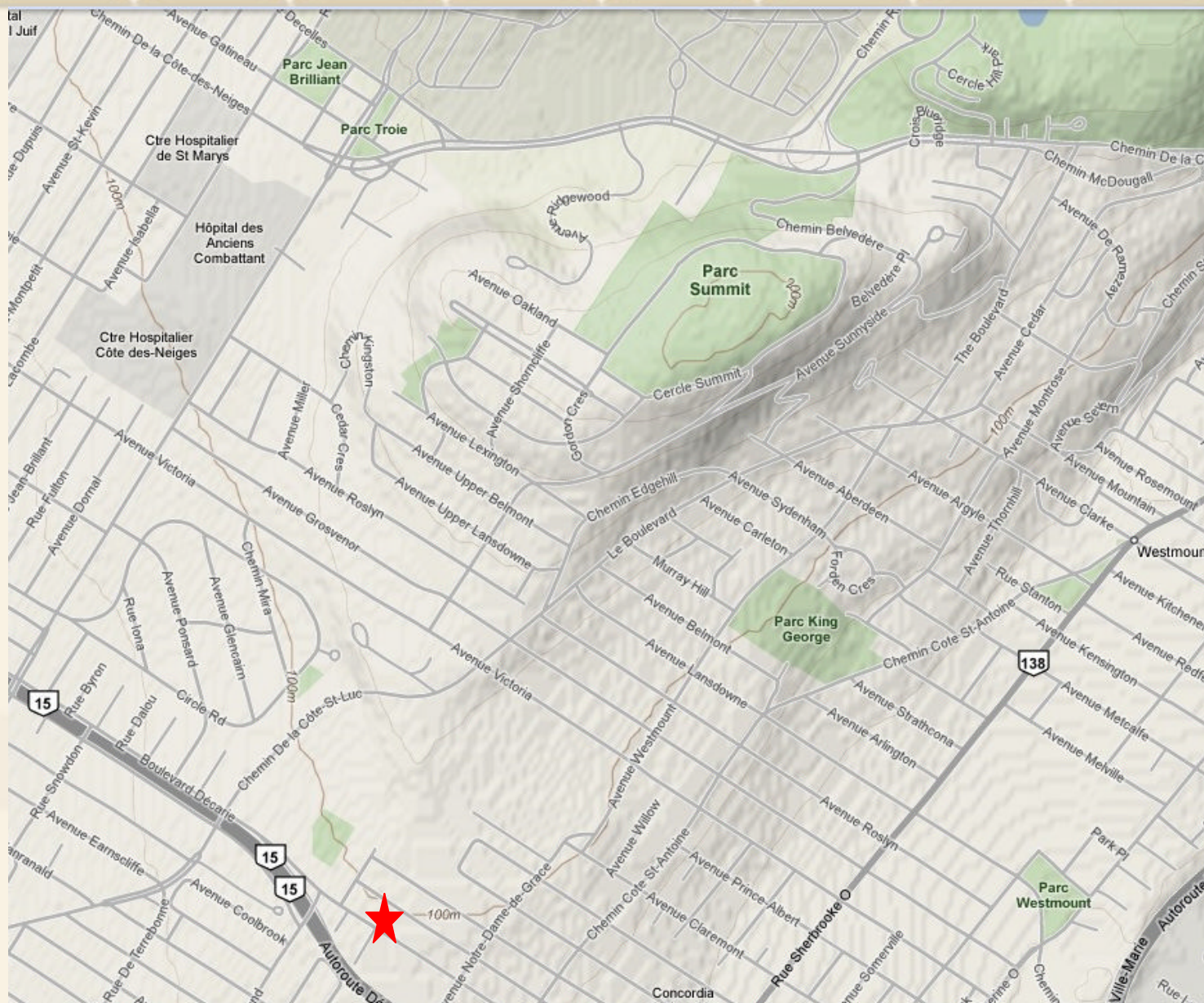








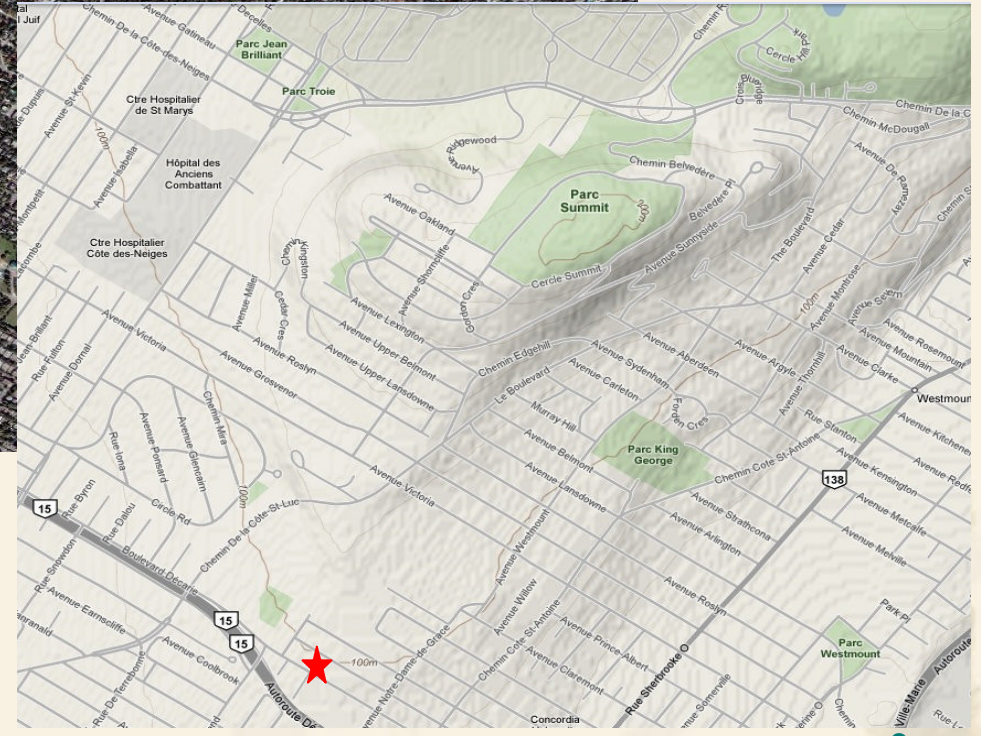
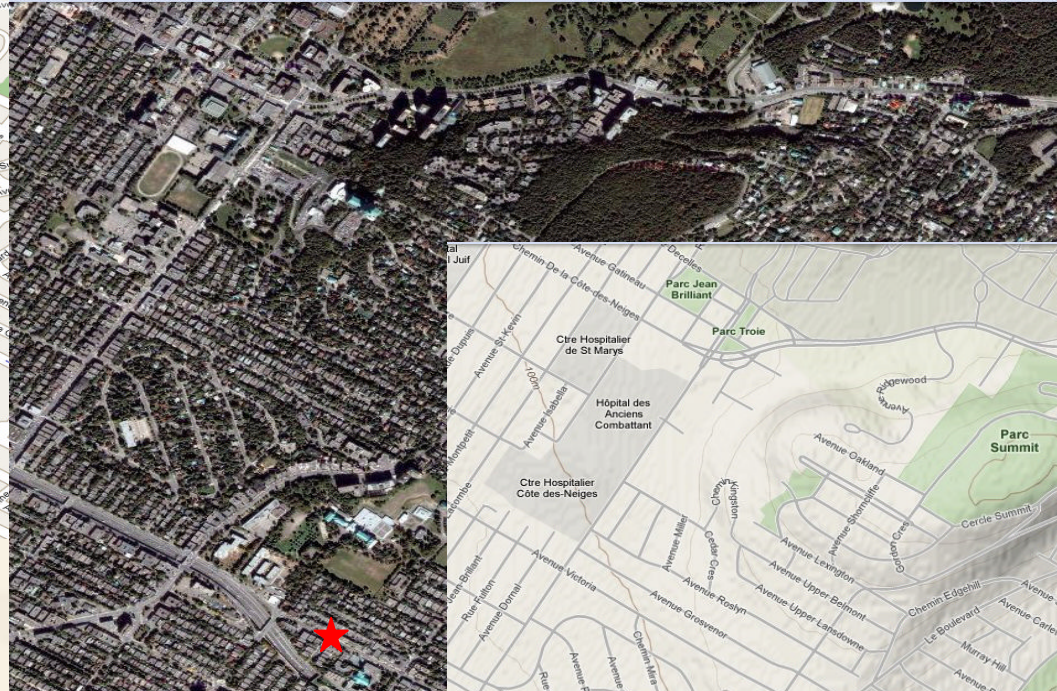
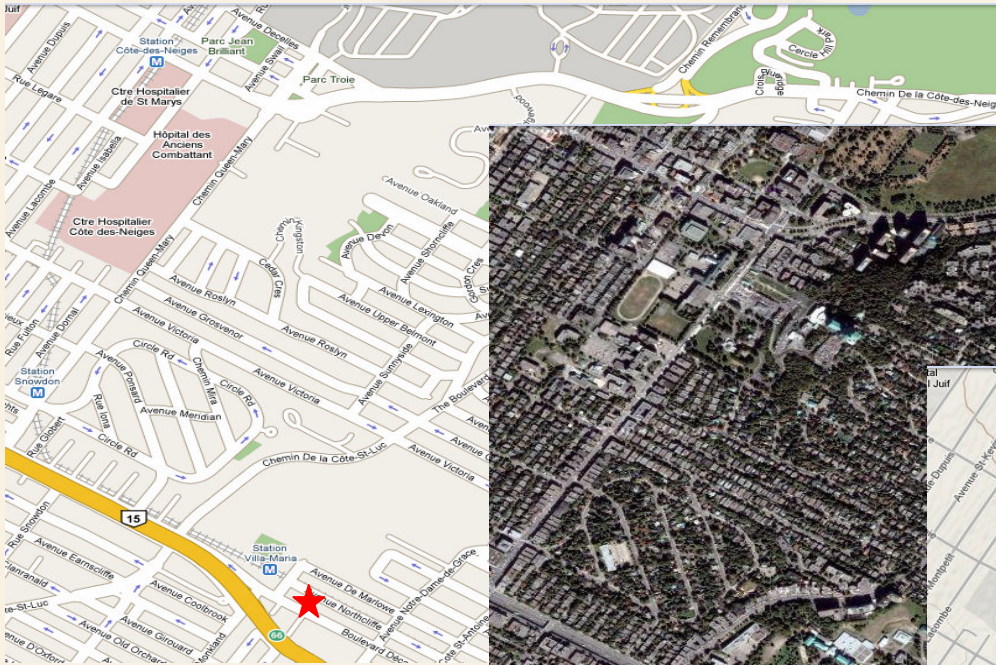








# Maps Are Not Terrain





## Definition and Introduction to TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine)



- ❖ An independent and comprehensive medicinal system, enriched by thousands of years of clinical observations, practice & documentation.
- ❖ The concept of unity within the human body and unity between the human body and nature.
- ❖ Diagnosis & treatment based on a comprehensive analysis of signs & symptoms (Bian Zheng Shi Zhi).
- ❖ Five fundamental theories and eight diagnostic principles
- ❖ Its therapeutic tools include:
  - ◆ Acupuncture,
  - ◆ Chinese herbal medicine,
  - ◆ Massotherapy (Tuina),
  - ◆ Therapeutic exercise, such as Taiji and QiGong (Meditation)
  - ◆ And dietary regulation.





## Menopause Without Menopausal Syndrome ?

- ❖ Menopause does not have to be accompanied by syndromes
  - ◆ Around 80% of North American women experience some form of menopausal symptoms
  - ◆ Women in many other cultures may have much lower chance to have menopausal symptoms
- ❖ Menopause is an intelligent homeostatic mechanism to prolong women's life, when they passed reproductive age and menstruation become an unnecessary burden for their bodies
- ❖ Menopausal syndromes may be prevented, minimized and treated in majority of cases, according to TCM theories, clinical studies and our clinical experiences





## Menstruation per TCM

- ❖ Menstruation is a result of surplus of Blood, which overflows every 28 days
- ❖ The creation of Blood is the work of Spleen, Heart, Kidneys and Liver:
  - ◆ Spleen distills the food essence (nutrition) and send it to the Heart, concurrently, the Kidney provide a small amount of congenital essence (genetics) to the Heart;
  - ◆ The Heart transforms the food essence and congenital essence to Blood to nourish the body and to produce menstruation, when there is a surplus of Blood, which only happens when:
    - The Spleen and the Kidney are functioning at their best – after puberty & before menopause
    - Sufficient food essence (good nutrition) & congenital essence (good genetics) are available
    - Excessive consumption of food essence & congenital essence (over draining life style, poor rest, major diseases ...) are absent.
- ❖ The Surplus of Blood is stored in the Liver and then sent to Uterus to nourished the fetus when pregnant or to overflow to become menstruation when not pregnant.



## Menopause per TCM

- ❖ Menopause occurs when the surplus of Blood is insufficient to form menstruation when:
  - ◆ The Spleen is declining in function due to aging, malnutrition, disease and unable to send sufficient food essence to the Heart;
  - ◆ The Kidney congenital essence is depleted by aging, diseases, childbearing, excessive sex and over draining life style and poor rest.





## Main Menopausal Symptoms and Syndromes

### ❖ Main symptoms:

- ◆ Hot flashes, night sweats, insomnia, irritability & depression,
- ◆ Nervousness & anxiety, fatigue, heart palpitation, nausea, diarrhea, constipation, joint stiffness, muscle cramps,
- ◆ Vaginal and / or skin dryness, osteoporosis, abnormal menstruation & low libido.

### ❖ Main TCM Syndromes:

- ◆ Kidney Yin Deficiency
- ◆ Liver Wind Stirring Internally and/or Ascendant Hyperactivity of Liver Yang
- ◆ Kidney Yang Deficiency
- ◆ Kidney Yin & Yang Deficiency
- ◆ Heart & Kidneys disharmony or Heart & Spleen Qi Deficiency
- ◆ Phlegm Obstruction & Qi Stagnation

## Menopausal Syndromes - Kidney Yin Deficiency



- ❖ Pathognomic manifestations:
  - ◆ Hot flashes and night sweats, heat in the center of the hands, feet, and pericardium;
  - ◆ Menses sometimes excessive, sometimes scant, possible spotting without cessation, pale red colored menstrual blood,
  - ◆ Dizziness, tinnitus, headache, blurred vision, heart vexation, irritable, emotional;
  - ◆ Soreness and weakness in the low back and knees, constipation, insomnia, a red face and red cheeks, a dry mouth but no particular desire to drink,
- ❖ A dry, red tongue without coating, and wiry, thready, rapid pulse
- ❖ Treatment principles: Enrich Yin and nourish Liver



## Menopausal Syndromes - Liver Wind Stirring Internally and/or Ascendant Hyperactivity of Liver Yang



- ❖ Pathognomic manifestations:
  - ◆ Dizziness, vertigo, heart vexation, irritable, hot sensations in the body and face especially in the afternoon, sweating
  - ◆ Soreness and weakness of the low back and knees
  - ◆ Profuse menstrual bleeding or lingering menstrual flow,
- ❖ A red tongue with scant coating, and a thready, wiry, rapid pulse.
- ❖ Treatment principles: Enrich Yin and descend Fire, level the Liver and extinguish Wind

## Menopausal Syndromes - Kidney Yang Deficiency



- ❖ Pathognomic manifestations:
  - ◆ Dull facial complexion, soreness and weakness of the low back and knees, dizziness, poor appetite, abdominal distention,
  - ◆ A bland, tastelessness in the mouth,
  - ◆ Frequent clear and long urination or scant urination with edematous swelling possibly of the face, loose stools
  - ◆ Excessive pale colored menses,
  - ◆ Chilly extremities, excessive white & watery vaginal discharge.
- ❖ A pale white tongue with thin, white coating, and a deep, small, retarded; deep, weak; or deep, thready, forceless pulse
- ❖ Treatment principles: Warm the Kidneys and supplement Yang





## Menopausal Syndromes - Kidney Yin & Yang Deficiency

- ❖ Pathognomic manifestations:
  - ◆ Dizziness, vertigo, tinnitus, sore lower back lacking strength,
  - ◆ Lack of warmth in hands and feet,
  - ◆ Alternating hot and cold sensations or hot above and cold below,
- ❖ A pale tongue and a deep, thready, wiry pulse
- ❖ Treatment principles: Mainly supplement both Kidney Yin and Yang aided by descending Fire

## Menopausal Syndromes - Heart & Spleen Deficiency



- ❖ Pathognomic manifestations:
  - ◆ Palpitations, shortness of breath, poor memory, insomnia,
  - ◆ A sallow yellow facial complexion, weariness and exhaustion, lack of strength,
  - ◆ Reduced appetite, stomach and abdominal distention
- ❖ A pale tongue with thin coating, and a thready, sodden pulse
- ❖ Treatment principles: Nourish the Heart, support the Spleen, and boost the Qi





## Menopausal Syndromes - Heart & Kidneys Disharmony

- ❖ Pathognomic manifestations:
  - ◆ Amenorrhea or scant menses with pale red color
  - ◆ Dizziness, tinnitus, empty vexation, insomnia, heart palpitations, poor memory, aching low back and weak knees,
  - ◆ Hot flashes and night sweats, constipation, short & darkish urine, facial color empty red, throat dry but no desire to drink,
- ❖ A red tongue without coating, and a thready, rapid or thready, weak, rapid pulse
- ❖ Treatment principles: Enrich Yin, tranquilize the Heart, and calm the Spirit, re-harmonize the Heart and Kidney

## Menopausal Syndromes - Phlegm Obstruction & Qi Stagnation



- ❖ Pathognomic manifestations:
  - ◆ Obesity, stuffy chest, profuse phlegm,
  - ◆ Abdominal distention, belching, acid regurgitation, nausea, lack of appetite,
  - ◆ Edema, loose stools,
- ❖ A white, slimy tongue coating, and a slippery or slippery, wiry pulse
- ❖ Treatment principles: Regulate the Qi, transform Phlegm, and strengthen the Spleen





## All About Hot Flashes

- ❖ Over 70% ~ 80% of North American menopausal women experience hot flashes
- ❖ Hot flashes which are primarily caused by Yin deficiency, and unable to keep Yang in balance, Yang rises to form hot flashes, according to TCM theory
- ❖ Events and activities that contributing to Yin deficiency:
  - ◆ Alcohol, caffeinated beverages, tobacco, recreational drugs & spicy food consumes Yin
  - ◆ Estrogen blockers & some prescription medication consumes Yin
  - ◆ “Night hawk” lifestyle prevent Yin from being nourished
  - ◆ Stressful lifestyle cause Qi stagnation that is transformed into Liver Fire and over consumes Yin



## Menopausal Syndrome and TCM Treatment

### ❖ Acupuncture

- ◆ Most frequently used TCM modality in Canada
- ◆ More efficacy in regulating Qi (Vital energy) flows & organ functions
- ◆ Less efficacy in supplement organ deficiency

### ❖ TCM herbal medicine

- ◆ Most frequently used and documented TCM modality in China
- ◆ Most efficacy in supplement organ deficiency
- ◆ Very efficient in regulating Qi flows and organ functions

### ❖ Massotherapy

- ◆ Very effective in regulating Qi flows & dispel Qi and / or Blood stagnation
- ◆ Very efficient in relaxing tense muscles and calm mind

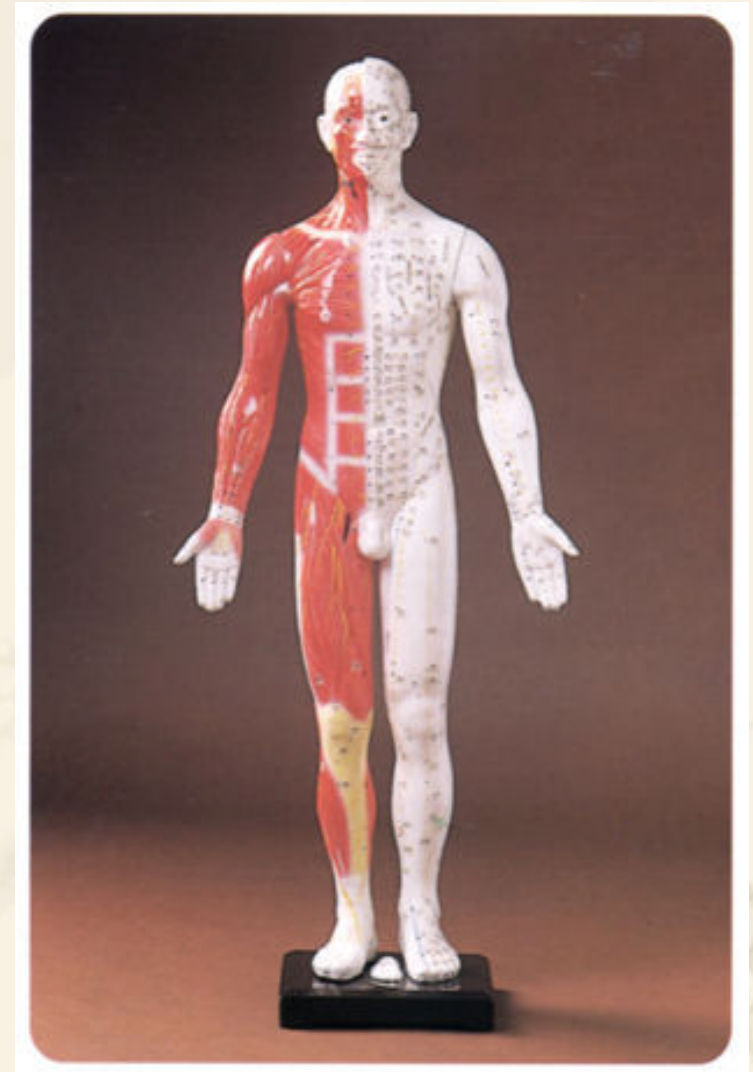
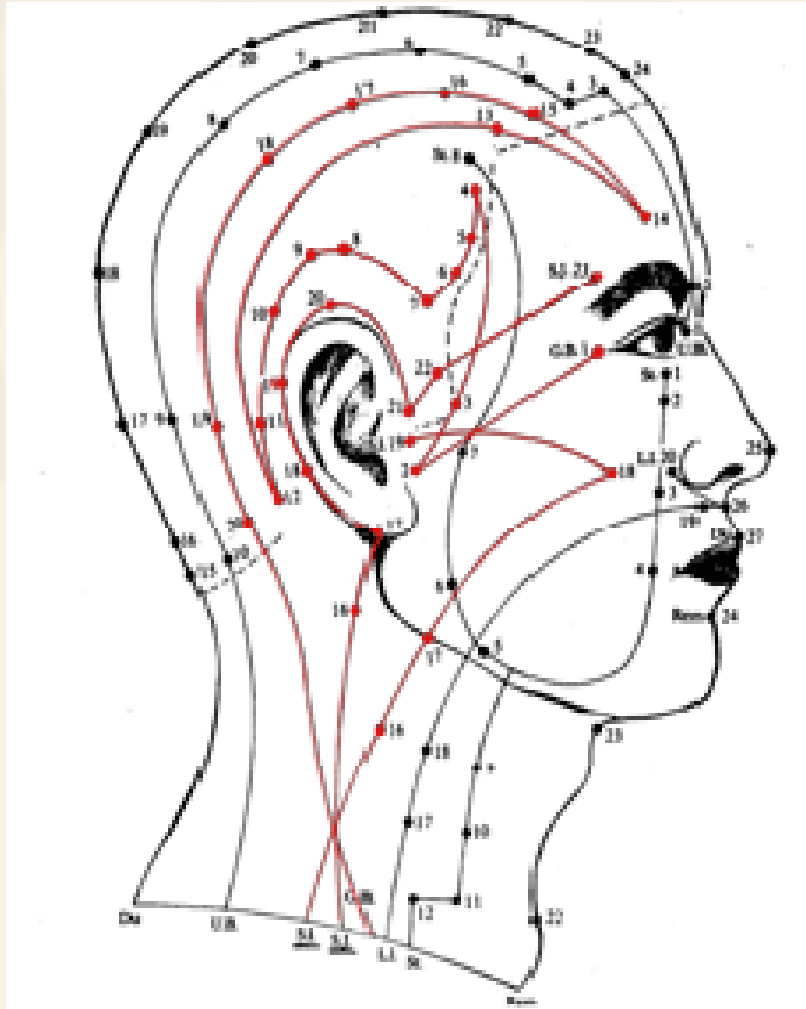




## Meridians, Acupuncture and Acupoints

- ❖ Acupuncture: manipulation of thin needles inserted into acupoints on the meridian system to affect the flow of Qi, to influence the human's physiological functions
- ❖ The meridian system consists of 20 channels & over 15 collaterals
- ❖ Most acupoints (361) are located on the meridians
- ❖ The meridians make the human body an organic whole. They:
  - ▲ are linked to each other,
  - ▲ connect the superficial to the interior, the upper to the lower body, the viscera to the bowels, and the four limbs to all bones,
  - ▲ transport Qi & Blood to nourish the body,
  - ▲ conduct stimulation, transmit feedback and regulate physiological functions.
  - ▲ are invisible to modern technologies.

# Meridians



- ❖ Meridians - 20 Channels & many collaterals





## Menopausal Syndrome and Self-help

### ❖ TCM dietary regulation:

- ◆ Herbal tea – usually with one or a few dry herbs that are commonly-known to help with certain symptoms and safe for self-administration
- ◆ Herbal soup & porridge
- ◆ Good eating habit:
  - Avoid – cigarette, recreational drugs, alcohol, caffeinated beverages, cold food and spicy food.
  - Increase – nutritious and warm food
  - Raw vs cooked food – it is true that raw food contains more nutrients, but it is also true that nutrients in raw food cost more precious Qi to get it.
  - Vegetarianism – Yang energy and certain nutrients are more abundant and bioavailable in animal meat

### ❖ Therapeutic exercise – Tai Ji and Qi Gong (meditation)



## A Randomized Controlled Pilot Study of Acupuncture for Post Menopausal Hot flashes: Effect on Nocturnal Hot Flashes & Sleep Quality

**Objective:** To assess the effectiveness of **acupuncture on postmenopausal nocturnal hot flashes and sleep.**

**Design:** Prospective randomized placebo-controlled study.

**Setting:** Stanford University School of Medicine and private acupuncture offices.

**Intervention(s):** Active or placebo acupuncture was administered for **nine sessions over seven weeks.**

**Main Outcome Measure(s):** Severity and frequency of nocturnal hot flashes from daily diaries and Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI).

**Patient(s):** Twenty-nine postmenopausal women experiencing at least seven moderate to severe hot flashes daily, with E2 <18 pg/mL and FSH 30.0–110.0 IU/L.

**Result(s):** **Nocturnal hot-flash severity significantly decreased in the active acupuncture group (28%) compared with the placebo group (6%),**  $P=.017$ . The frequency of nocturnal hot flashes also decreased in the active group (47%,  $P=.001$ ), though it was not significantly different from the placebo group (24%,  $P=.170$ ; effect size = 0.65). Treatment did not differentially influence sleep; however, correlations between improvements in PSQI and reductions in nocturnal hot flash severity and frequency were significant ( $P<.026$ ).

**Conclusion(s):** **Acupuncture significantly reduced the severity of nocturnal hot flashes compared with placebo.** Given the strength of correlations between improvements in sleep and reductions in nocturnal hot flashes, further exploration is merited.

Huang, M. et al, *Fertility and Sterility*, September 2006; vol 86: pp 700-710.



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## Acupuncture beats drug to treat hot flashes: study

**Will Dunham, Reuters**

Published: Monday, September 22, 2008

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Acupuncture works as well as a drug commonly



# Acupuncture for the Treatment of Vasomotor Symptoms in Breast Cancer Patients Receiving Hormone Suppression Treatment

E.M. Walker, et al. Henry Ford Health System Department of Radiation Oncology & Complementary & Integrative Medicine Program, Detroit, MI

**Purpose/Objective(s):** **Vasomotor symptoms (hot flashes, etc.)** are common debilitating side effects of anti-estrogen treatment in conventional breast cancer care. Hormone replacement therapy, normally used in postmenopausal women to treat these symptoms, is contraindicated in breast cancer patients. The antidepressant, venlafaxine (Effexor), a serotonin reuptake inhibitor, is currently the pharmacological therapy of choice for these hot flashes. However, many women refuse this treatment approach because of potential side effects that include sexual dysfunction and nausea, or they simply do not want to take any more medication. This randomized clinical trial (RCT) tested the hypothesis that acupuncture reduces vasomotor symptoms in breast cancer patients receiving hormonal therapy and produces fewer side effects than venlafaxine.

**Materials/Methods:** Patients treated for breast cancer (Stages 0-III) receiving either Tamoxifen or Arimidex and having at least 14 hot flashes per week were randomized to receive a 12 week course of acupuncture or venlafaxine. 47 total patients completed the study (24 acupuncture, 23 venlafaxine). Patients logged daily the number and severity of hot flashes for one-week prior to treatment (baseline), during the course of treatment, and at regular intervals throughout 1 year following treatment. Other outcome measures assessed before, during, and after treatment included menopause-specific quality of life, general health status (SF-12), Beck Depression Inventory, and side effects.

**Results:** Both **acupuncture** and venlafaxine groups **exhibited significant decreases in hot flashes and other menopausal, quality of life symptoms**, as well as decreases in depressive symptoms. These changes were similar in the 2 groups, indicating that acupuncture is at least as effective as venlafaxine in reducing vasomotor and other symptoms associated with anti-estrogen hormonal treatment of breast cancer. Additionally, numerous patients treated with venlafaxine reported negative side effects including nausea, dry mouth, headache, difficulty sleeping, dizziness, double vision, increased blood pressure, constipation, fatigue, anxiety, feeling “spaced out,” and body jerking during the night. **Patients treated with acupuncture experienced no negative side effects. They reported increased energy, clarity of thought, sexual desire, and overall sense of well-being (compared to pretreatment).**

**Conclusions:** The results of this study suggest that adding acupuncture to breast cancer treatment regimens may establish an integrative approach that is more effective in managing symptoms due to treatment with fewer side effects than conventional pharmacotherapy treatment.



## The Advantages of Treating Menopausal Syndrome with TCM

- ❖ TCM is effective
- ❖ TCM has no side effects
- ❖ TCM has millenniums of documented clinical experience
- ❖ TCM is individualized
- ❖ TCM is preventive medicine
- ❖ TCM offers self-empowerment
- ❖ TCM is holistic



## Safety Concerns of Acupunctures & TCM Herbs

- ❖ The safe practice of acupuncture and herbal medicine has been continually documented over many centuries
- ❖ Reports of adverse reactions to acupuncture & herbal medicine are extremely rare in clinical practice
- ❖ Most of the reported cases are caused by:
  - ◆ Poor quality control of herbs – reports of heavy metals, pesticide residues...
  - ◆ Misuse of herbal medicine – **Ephedra - Ma Huang**, safely used for thousands of years to treat asthma, hay fever and cold in TCM, but misused in dietary supplement industry. Banned by USA FDA and Health Canada.
  - ◆ Malpractice – improper sterilization of needles and skins causing infections.



## Myth and Controversy about TCM



- ❖ A completely unfamiliar paradigm & philosophy
- ❖ Currently unexplainable by modern science
- ❖ The meridians, the most important cornerstone of acupuncture, don't actually correspond to any recognized body system.
- ❖ Incomprehensible for thin needles placed on the skin to produce significant physiological changes
- ❖ A few decades-old practice in North America, although it has been continually practiced thousands of years in China
- ❖ There is an insufficient number of double blind and placebo controlled studies available, possibly due to lack of interest and funding
- ❖ Current clinical study protocols undervalue the efficacy of TCM

## TCM Herbs & Acupuncture in Clinical Studies



- ❖ Clinical trials are increasing at an accelerated rate in the West
  - ◆ Results are mixed, but encouraging
  - ◆ Some landmark studies are changing westerners perceptions
- ❖ Most clinical studies undervalued the efficacy of acupuncture due to inappropriate design that does not reflect the manner in which acupuncture is traditionally practiced. For example:
  - ◆ Selection of participants only according to diseases, not syndromes;
  - ◆ Standard acupuncture points for every participants, rather than specific treatment unique to each individual;
  - ◆ Selected acupuncture points are not allowed to change when symptoms change.
- ❖ Many clinical studies on herbs focus on active ingredient of certain herbs, not the efficacy of herbal formulas per TCM.
  - ◆ Some herbs are toxic when used alone, but not toxic and very effective when used in a formula (Ephedra etc).



Thanks for listening!



❖ Questions

❖ For further information regarding to:

- ◆ This presentation and future engagements
- ◆ Acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine

❖ Contact us at: 514 483 6669 or [ainazhang@sinocare.ca](mailto:ainazhang@sinocare.ca)