

EDITORIAL

Dr. Zhang Chi, the Head of the Traditional, Complementary, and Integrative Medicine Unit (TCI) at the Headquarters of WHO (2010-2022)

Dr. Zhang Qi, born in China, graduated in modern and traditional medicine in his home country. He spearheaded the integration of traditional medicine services into the mainstream (modern Western) healthcare system, leading the traditional medicine services in the healthcare sector. He assumed the presidency of the International Cooperation Department of China's State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine (SATCM). Later, He was selected as the vice-president of the China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences in the People's Republic of China.

In 2009, Dr. Zhang Qi joined the World Health Organization (WHO). In 2010, he was appointed as the head of the Traditional, Complementary, and Integrative Medicine Unit in the Integrated Health Services Department of the World Health Organization. He served in this position until 2022. He played a pivotal role in reviving traditional medicines globally, dedicating his efforts to integrating traditional medicines into the healthcare systems of various countries. As a result, he initiated the update of WHO's strategies concerning traditional medicines (WHO traditional medicine strategy, 2014-2023). In line with this strategy, countries worldwide undertook the publica-

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tion of articles highlighting the necessity of establishing national classification systems for their respective traditional medicines. This initiative ultimately led to the formation of the Traditional Medicine and Complementary Medicine section in the international disease classification system (ICD-11) (Safdari, et al, 2021; Reddy, and Fan, 2022). Another endeavor of Dr. Zhang Qi was the update and expansion of training and practice benchmarks and the development of standard terminologies for various traditional medicines (WHO benchmarks for the training of Unani medicine, 2022; WHO benchmarks for the practice of Unani medicine, 2022; WHO international standard terminologies on Unani medicine, 2023).

His efforts led to global awareness of the revival of traditional medicines and even international and global competitions and occasional misunderstandings. For instance, the common heritage of Unani and Persian medicine sparked debates around naming benchmarks and terminologies. However, through his ingenuity in accepting different names and devising separate benchmarks, this matter transformed from a threat to an opportunity for expanding various traditional medicines and strengthening their interconnections.

Also, Dr. Zhang Qi made valuable efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic to organize meetings for traditional medicine scientists to provide acceptable TM medical care (WHO COVID-19 meeting report, 2021).

One of his last meritorious services was the inauguration of the WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (GCTM) in Jamnagar, Gujarat, India, on April 20, 2022. This was a big step in the research and development of traditional medicines supported by WHO (WHO GCTM, 2022).

Conflict of Interest

None.

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