

## The Importance of Online Herbal Publications **Minchen Wang**

**Received:** June 24, 2015; **Accepted:** September 27, 2015; **Published:** November 10, 2015

Department of Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine, Pacific College of Oriental Medicine, San Diego, California, USA

The timing for launching this online herbal journal could not be better. Several combined forces make creation of such publication almost inevitable.

**Corresponding author:** Minchen Wang

This year, 2015, marks the first ever Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine awarded to an herbalist, a Chinese researcher, Youyou Tu "for her discoveries concerning a novel therapy against Malaria". There are several interesting background stories about Tu's work. It involves extracting active ingredients from the herb called Qing Hao 青蒿 (*Artemisia Annuua*). She clinically proved that these compounds are effective in combating malaria. Incredibly, she was allowed to do her research in the era of Great Culture Revolution while, for 10 years, throughout China, every school was closed, millions of intellectuals were sent to countryside to be re-educated.

✉ pbacupuncture@gmail.com

Pacific College of Oriental Medicine, San Diego, California, USA.

**Tel:** +40 21 315 9249

Malaria is endemic in tropical and subtropical areas around the globe. According to UNICEF, it is the number three killer in children globally. The standard treatment for malaria has been based on quinine and its derivatives. Quinine was first obtained from the bark of cinchona tree. Now, after decades of application, these drugs are losing their effectiveness, as more and more malaria causing parasites developed resistance.

**Citation:** Minchen Wang. The Importance of Online Herbal Publications. Herb Med. 2015, 2:1.

Such drug resistivity is not an isolated incidence limiting to parasites. In fact, we are now in a healthcare crisis, facing bacteria's with rapid evolving drug resistance. MERSA is now pervasive and there is no solution in sight, we are running out of antibiotics to effectively combat them.

The prospect of creating a new antibiotic is dire. It costs billions of US dollars trying to develop a new drug, with no guarantee for success. It is such a risky proposition. Thus, there is very little incentive for any pharmaceutical company to jump in this market. This is a very serious matter in medicine. It is not an exaggeration to say that modern medicine is founded on effective antibiotics.

It is urgent to take a serious search for viable alternatives. Without doubt, medicinal herbs around us should be one of the priorities in this quest. It has track record of success in history-being the only viable healing means in healthcare in many parts of world throughout human history. It is readily accessible for study and the source is everywhere. There is a treasure trove of knowledge created though thousands of years of human history. The stumbling block- Because plants are complex, there are lots of unknown about them. Qing Hao, mentioned above has been known for thousands years in Asia to treat certain fever and skin diseases, but it was never used for malaria treatment.

Helping combating pathogenic microbial is just one objective of herbal study. In my view, it has an even more important role to play- addressing the ultimate goal of improving our health. As our understanding get deeper about the relationships between microbial and human body, it is becoming clear that our health literally depends on microbial in and around us. A healthy body relies on a healthy symbiotic coexistence between our body and the microbial inside and around us. Current antimicrobial medicines destroy the flora of microbial in our body indiscriminately, disturbing the microbial environment. It leads to many unwanted consequences, such as diarrhea, yeast infection to name a few.

The better alternative is support our body nature function to minimize the susceptibility to infections. Toward this objective, herbal medicine offers great potential and should be rigorously pursued. After all, in many cultures, herbal food is considered as part of medicine.

Through herbal study, we are likely to uncover secrets of co-existence of living organisms in which herbs are part of. Such knowledge should enhance our ability to improve the way of healthcare. This task is enormously complicated that requires the contributions from people around the globe.

A key for the success of these pursuits is the availability of speedy communication passageway, enabling gathering and distribution of high quality information from around the world. They have to be fast and inexpensive to use. Such requisite is impossible to fulfill just a few years ago because of the cost.

The advancement of Internet has changed the landscape of communication. Not only on speed and cost, more importantly, it provides added neat tools such as sounds and visuals through videos and search engines. All greatly enhance the quality and depth of communication. Herbs are complex, each single herbs contains thousands of chemical compounds. Looking forward, we should be getting help from artificial intelligent capability of computer to deal with the complexity of herbs to truly tap the tremendous potential of herbs.

As with Yin-Yang predicament, this capability of Internet also results in the explosion of miss-information on the Net. Trying to access any reliable information on the Net these days is often a struggle, much like finding a gem in a mountain of garbage. A great waste of time and a great concern. For the progress of herbal science, what is vital is a centralized forum where only truthful information is presented. Traditionally, it is the role played by peer-reviewed publications. Time has changed. Such publications are facing difficult times in our Internet based society. The creation of on-line journal of herbal medicine becomes necessary to fulfill this role.

In this new forum, submitted articles are reviewed for the error to assure the accuracy, to make sure the content can be trusted. It is then published quickly. Both criteria are essential. It is accessible from any part of the globe with huge pool of contributors and readers. Equally important, if not more, is the availability of multimedia contents. Such contents greatly enhance the effectiveness of idea communication. It may also result in higher placement potential with search engines and thus avail to wider audience. It is a feature the traditional publications can only dream of.

Nobody knows where these efforts lead to. However, uncertainty is the nature of scientific inquiry. What is certain is that we are at the crossroad in healthcare crisis. Demands for healthcare are increasing with dwindling resources. It is a new world in which powerful social, economic, geopolitical forces are demanding a major change of healthcare delivery. Exploring herbal medicine is providing important knowledge to help the change. It should serve as a vital pipeline of information to facilitate the change.

This is truly exciting!