

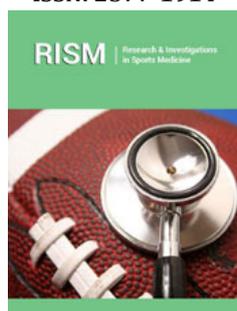
Physical Type and Fitness Regime: Inspired by Medieval Chinese Medical Theory

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Opinion

Although the pace of modern life speeds up incredibly, people never stop seeking for a 'healthy life-style' and squeeze their time on fitness. Most people, especially students and salarymen who have regular living routine, choose to spend an hour or so every day in gyms or park running or stretching. However, only a few people realize that not all kinds of practices are suitable for them. On the contrary, inadaptable sports may cause chronic injury to the body. Certainly, most fitness center can offer private regime based on the data computed by physique test under the guidance of professional trainers. These data generally contain the BMI (Body Mass Index), WHR (Waist Hip Rate), BFR (Body Fat Rate), BMR (Basal Metabolic Rate), LBM (Lean Body Mass), etc. And the trainees are usually told to fix their 'unnatural' data compared with a settled standard of 'healthy body' by following their 'personal regime' offered by gyms. Therefore, to some extent, it is a highly unified criteria that is covered by 'personal' here. Without the consciousness about it, people may keep on thinking it's their own problems when they personally feel yoga is too annoying or spinning is too suffocating.

People are born differently. Thus, the idea of assessing everybody by using the same gauge itself can hardly be scientific. In addition, even the physical and mental condition of a same person will vary with seasons and geography. The diversity of individuals brings the necessity to reconsider the concept of 'personal' in making of fitness regime on the basis of the physical feature. According to medieval Chinese medical theory, the physique condition of a person is integrated by the innate and acquired status. The latter one is gradually formed due to more complex factors such as habits, environment, nutrition and emotion. In other words, all these factors should be taken into account when planning best suitable regime. However, systemizing an individual fitness project for every trainee with a thorough consideration of their own situations might be complicated and bothering. Accordingly, the existed classification systems about human physiques can inspire a lot to simplify this problem.

As the main basis of all current Chinese medical theory, the Huang Di Nei Jing (Yellow Emperor's Inner Canon) includes several articles relevant to physique types within different classified systems. To be specific, the articles 'Plain Conversation: Discussion on Blood, Qi, Body and Emotions', 'Plain Conversation: Discussion on Different Therapeutic Methods of Different Diseases', 'Spiritual Pivot: Twenty-five Types of People Divided According to Yin and Yang', 'Spiritual Pivot: Correspondence between Man and Nature', 'Spiritual Pivot: Abnormality, Normality, Obesity and Emaciation' have narratives on physique types from at least five diverse perspectives [1]. In general, the physique type can be told by observing the shape, color on the face, movement of a person, under the ideology of yin-yang and Qi. But by comparison, the statement about twenty-five yin-yang types in the Ling Shu (Spiritual Pivot) is the most highly systemized and easily used as the reference one.

In this article, the physique types of humans are categorized into 'five times five, i.e., twenty-five types'. Under the categorization of five phases, namely metal, wood, water, fire and earth, humans can be 'distinguished on the basis of five different physical appearances',

and further subdivided into five detailed subtypes. For instance, the physical appearance of 'wood' usually: 'head is small, face is long, shoulders and back are big, body stands up straight, hands and feet are small'. Additionally, the 'wood' people, 'they love wealth, they tax their heart, they have little physical strength, and they worry much; they work hard at reaching their tasks'. As for their health status, 'they endure spring and summer; they cannot stand autumn and winter. When affected during these seasons, they will develop a disease' [2]. The article has given detailed description on all the five main categories of people, thus nearly every person can fit himself into one. Obviously, the whole theory is not constructed on the basis of data, but on the observation and narration of living human beings.

In acu-moxa treatment, practitioners can vary their strength and technique to offer their patients more suitable and personal therapy according to their own physical condition, since different treatments have specific properties [3]. Similarly, the fitness practices will be classified into several categories as well, even from the Chinese medical point of view. They can be labeled as yin, yang,

reinforcing or draining, depending on their intensity or effects. In this way, the category of physique types will match more precisely with the category of fitness practices.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is the obscurity of Chinese language and ideology that always increases the difficulty of using Chinese medical knowledge. However, one may escape from dealing with the cross-cultural problem in matching categories under the oriental ideology to tailoring fitness scheme. The idea will not only make medieval Chinese wisdom more exercisable but improve the efficacy and individualization of modern fitness.

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