



The NCCAOM[®] Certification in Oriental Medicine

About Oriental Medicine

- Oriental medicine which includes the practice of acupuncture, Chinese herbology and Asian bodywork therapy (ABT) is a comprehensive health care system encompassing a variety of traditional healthcare therapies that have been used for more than 3,000 years to diagnose and treat illness, prevent disease and improve well-being.

About Acupuncture

- Acupuncture is one of the essential elements of Oriental medicine. It is one of the oldest, most commonly used healing practices in the world, originating in China more than 3,000 years ago. ¹
- The term acupuncture describes a family of procedures involving stimulation of anatomical points on the body by a variety of techniques. American practices of acupuncture incorporate medical traditions from China, Japan, Korea, and other countries. The acupuncture technique that has been most studied scientifically involves the insertion of the skin with thin, solid, metallic needles that are manipulated by the hands or by electrical stimulation. ¹
- According to the 2007 National Health Interview Survey - the largest and most comprehensive survey of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) use by American adults to date - acupuncture use has increased between 2002 and 2007 among adults. In 2007, almost 4 out of 10 adults had used CAM therapy in the past 12 months. Acupuncture is one of the CAM therapies that have seen an increase usage during this time period. ²

About Chinese Herbology

- Chinese herbal medicine is one of the main modalities within the scope of Oriental medicine. Chinese herbology includes use substances such as plants, roots, minerals and more. Chinese herbology was developed as an integral part of Chinese medicine and is used to re-harmonize imbalances in the body. ³
- The World Health Organization (WHO) defines herbal medicines to include herbs, herbal materials, herbal preparations and finished herbal products that contain as active ingredients parts of plants, or other plant materials, or combinations. ⁴

- Chinese formulas are comprised of herbs designed for each individual patient. This special formulation is crucial because these formulas must be delicately composed for the purpose of achieving balance in each disharmonious state of being.

About Asian Bodywork Therapy

- Asian bodywork therapy is the third branch of Oriental medicine that involves the treatment of the human body/mind/spirit, including the electromagnetic or energetic field, which surrounds, infuses and brings the body to life, by pressure and/or manipulation.⁵ ABT uses traditional Asian techniques and treatment strategies to primarily affect and balance the energetic system for the purpose of treating the human body, emotions, mind, energy field and spirit for the promotion, maintenance and restoration of health.⁵
- ABT is noninvasive and does not require the use of needles, which is the ideal therapy for children and those who are apprehensive about receiving acupuncture treatments. Many Asian medicine practitioners use acupressure and other ABT therapy methods instead of acupuncture for these patients with excellent results. ABT also does not require the patient to disrobe unlike Western massage, making it suitable for all cultures and religious backgrounds.⁵

Oriental Medicine Can Relieve The Following Complaints

The WHO also recognizes acupuncture and Oriental medicine as effective for more than 43 common ailments including:⁶

Respiratory Disorders Sinusitis, Rhinitis Common cold Tonsillitis Sore throat Hay fever Bronchitis Bronchial Asthma	Disorders of the Eyes Acute conjunctivitis Myopia in children Cataracts without complications Central retinitis	Mental- Emotional Disorders Anxiety Depression Stress Insomnia Addictions Weight control
Musculo-skeletal Disorders Frozen shoulder, tennis elbow Low back pain Osteoarthritis and joint pains Stiff neck Tendinitis Bursitis Sprains Injuries from auto accidents Chronic fatigue syndrome Fibromyalgia	Gastro-intestinal Disorders Acute and chronic gastritis Hyperacidity Hiccoughs Acute uncomplicated duodenal ulcer Chronic duodenal ulcer (pain relief) Acute and chronic colitis Acute bacillary dysentery Constipation Diarrhea Paralytic ileus	Neurological Disorders Headache and Migraine Dizziness Trigeminal neuralgia Facial palsy (within 3-6 months) Pareses following stroke Peripheral neuropathies Meniere's disease Neurogenic bladder dysfunction Nocturnal enuresis Intercostal neuralgia Sciatica
Disorders of the Mouth Toothache Post extraction pain Gingivitis Acute and chronic pharyngitis	Ear Disorders Ringing in ears Deafness Meniere's disease Earache	Reproductive System Disorders Infertility Premenstrual syndrome (PMS) Irregular Menses Menstrual cramps Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) Menopausal symptoms Morning sickness Urinary incontinence Impotence

How widely is Oriental medicine being used in the U.S.?

In the United States, the use of Oriental medicine is gaining widespread acceptance, with more than 22,000 certified and/or licensed practitioners.

Are Oriental medicine and other complementary and alternative medicine programs being used in hospitals as well?

The 2007 American Hospital Association's Health Forum Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) Survey of Hospitals found that 35 percent of the hospitals offering CAM provide acupuncture as an outpatient service to their patients. Additionally, acupuncture is represented as one of the top six modalities in both outpatient and inpatient settings amongst those hospitals.⁷

Identifying a Qualified Oriental Medicine Practitioner

How do I find a qualified Oriental Medicine practitioner?

Look for a **Diplomate of Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM)**. You can find a Diplomate of Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM) or a Diplomate holding one or more other NCCAOM certifications by going to the [NCCAOM® Find a Practitioner](http://www.nccaom.org) directory at www.nccaom.org.

The additional designation of **licensed acupuncturist (L.Ac.)** is awarded by a state regulatory board. The NCCAOM website provides a table with state regulatory requirements and contact information. Currently, 44 states, plus the District of Columbia, require NCCAOM certification or the passing of the NCCAOM examination(s) as a requirement for licensure to practice Oriental medicine. Each state board has a unique set of requirements for licensure. State rules and regulations are subject to change; therefore, one should always confirm current requirements for licensure with the appropriate state board. More information on state requirements is available at www.nccaom.org.

What training does an NCCAOM Diplomate of Oriental Medicine have?

A Diplomate of Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM) has completed four academic years of education at the master's degree level in an acupuncture and Chinese herbology program accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (ACAOM). ACAOM is the only accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education as the authority for quality education and training in acupuncture and Oriental medicine. In addition to graduation from an ACAOM accredited program, a Diplomate of Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM) must demonstrate professional competency by passing NCCAOM certification examinations in Foundations of Oriental Medicine, Acupuncture and Point Location, Chinese Herbology, and Biomedicine. Generally, the NCCAOM Diplomate training and competency verification is in sharp contrast to the acupuncture and Oriental medicine training of other healthcare professionals such as chiropractors or registered nurses or even medical doctors who typically receive 100-300 hours of abbreviated training.⁵ Certified (and licensed) acupuncturists and Oriental medicine practitioners are also trained in standard medical history gathering, safety, and ethics, and recognition of when to refer patients to other healthcare professionals or consult with other medical practitioners.

NCCAOM and its Diplomates

The National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM) is widely accepted as the most influential leader in the field of acupuncture and Oriental medicine. There are currently over 14,000 active NCCAOM Diplomates (NCCAOM certificate holders) practicing under an NCCAOM certification.

The NCCAOM, established in 1982, is a non-profit organization whose mission is *to establish, assess, and promote recognized standards of competence and safety in acupuncture and Oriental medicine for the protection and benefit of the public*. NCCAOM certification programs are accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). NCCA's standards exceed the requirements set forth by the American Psychological Association and the United States Employment Opportunity Commission. As a requirement of accreditation the NCCAOM must submit annual reports to NCCA and must undergo a full reaccreditation every five years for each of its NCCA accredited programs. Additional information is available at <http://www.credentialingexcellence.org/>.



The following NCCAOM certifications carry the above NCCA accreditation seal:

Diplomate of Acupuncture (NCCAOM)
Diplomate of Chinese Herbology (NCCAOM)
Diplomate of Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM)
Diplomate of Asian Bodywork Therapy (NCCAOM)

Contact Information

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3. Traditional Chinese Medicine Resource Center; <http://www.tcmcentral.com>; accessed March 16, 2009.
4. Zhang, Xiaorui. General Guidelines for Methodologies on Research and Evaluation of Traditional Medicine; 2002, World Health Organization, Geneva.
5. American Organization for Bodywork Therapies of Asia; <http://www.aobta.org>; accessed on March 16, 2009.
6. Traditional Medicine – Growing Needs and Potential, World Health Organization Policy Perspective on Medicines; #1 May 2002; World Health Organization, Geneva.
7. Health Forum 2007 Complementary and Alternative Medicine Survey of Hospitals Summary of Results: August 2008: Chicago, Illinois.