

Meeting Report

From Kanazawa to eCAM

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Seeds of a CAM symposium nurturing eCAM

The idea of an international symposium was first proposed to me on a cold day in March of 2002. Professor Nobuo Yamaguchi had invited Dr Toyoshi Onji of Oxford University Press (OUP) to our part of western Japan for an oyster feast. Auspiciously, we were wearing bibs to facilitate the consumption of this delicacy from the Noto peninsula. This is Professor Yamaguchi's *modus operandi*: the best regional dishes and wine or sake always accompany momentous discussions. When Professor Edwin Cooper reminisces about their 25-year-old friendship, his stories are interspersed with descriptions of unusual and sometimes heavenly food and drink. It was at this point, our faces hot from the charcoal fire and pink with new rice wine, that Dr Onji announced that a successful symposium in November of that year was the only chance for the launching of a new international journal for complementary and alternative medicine (CAM).

Ishikawa Natural Medicinal Products Research Center (INMPRC)

The dream was conceived several years ago with Professor Tomio Tada, a world-renowned immunologist who, as he aged, grew closer to the traditional Asian therapies disdained by most Japanese trained in Western medical science. A playwright as well as a scientist, his sharp eyes and ears observed the growing need to loosen the vise-like grip that Western medicine has on healing. With his wide circle of colleagues in and out of academia, a plan was outlined to disseminate and gather information about new as well as old non-Western therapies. Talk of an international journal caught the attention of Toyoshi Onji at OUP, who had witnessed the developments. Professor Nobuo Yamaguchi offered the resources of his organization, the Ishikawa Natural Medicinal Products Research Center (INMPRC), as the main source of funding for the effort. Yet, just as the plan was nearing fruition, illness and administrative difficulties drained the life energy from the project until the last hope—a symposium—was discussed over oysters.

The organization of our symposium and inklings of eCAM

Almost immediately, Edwin Cooper was contacted, for many on the Asian side of the Pacific knew him not only as a symposium organizer *extraordinaire* but also as a friend and compatriot. In the following months, as I moved between homes in Japan and the US and Edwin traveled from California to Germany and France and then back, we exchanged several e-mails on a daily basis. Professor Yamaguchi egged us on, hoping that he could take us out for *foie gras* and salmon steaks with a young Burgundy and in the stead of food promising financial support as Edwin's Herculean efforts pushed the number of invitees from five to twenty-two. We all forged on, calling on the talents of many friends such as Lisa LeRose who constructed a beautiful Website and pamphlet for the symposium and Izumi Kadoshima who designed the flower arrangements that adorned the halls of the symposium. Yasuko Fukamura, a kimono designer, agreed to ferry the accompanying delegates to places rarely seen by first-time visitors and Mary Lou Prince generously extended her moral support and expertise as she acted as the banker to handle the growing funds.

November 7, 2002, arrived quickly and invitees gathered from India, China, Taiwan, Europe and the United States, each feeling like an old friend after our months of correspondence. The delegates brought with them their unique histories and expertise, coming together for the first time in the conference halls in Kanazawa. Behind-the-scene activities kept me from attending all the meetings but when I did, what moved me most was the energy and flow of ideas. Sometimes Edwin caught my eye and we smiled. In only six months, we had brought these people together and now they were doing their part by contributing their ideas and most importantly, their energy.

Complementary and alternative approaches to biomedicine

One of our most important goals was to exchange information about the state of CAM in various parts of the world. In the plenary session, Dr Michael Irwin of UCLA spoke about CAM in the United States, the special role of NCCAM in promoting research and the establishment of facilities around

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the country. The next day, in the main session of the joint Japanese symposium, Dr Nobutaka Suzuki spoke about CAM in Japan, as did Dr Sze-Piao Yang about Taiwan. In another session, information was exchanged about CAM educational programs at universities as distant as Milan, Italy and Kanazawa, Japan, in presentations given by Drs Francesco Marotta and Suzuki. Dr G.P. Talwar and Dr H.D. Kumar from India presented their home situation of how they were grappling with challenges of the Indian population using CAM for reproductive tract infections and managing the nutritional and health needs of the malnourished. Dr Bruce Rabin spoke of his groundbreaking work in developing safe and effective health strategies against the problems rampant in industrialized countries. With Germany's enviable advancement in the acceptance of herbal drugs, Dr Gerhard Franz explained the quality requirements of herbal medicinal products as the basis of European phytotherapy.

To further energize the discussions, we invited Dr Charles Wallis, a philosopher, who opened a session titled 'Science vs Pseudoscience: Setting parameters for inclusion.' There was an emphasis not only on the history and status of CAM but also on the newest directions that it is taking in the world with Dr Haruki Yamada speaking of a new scientific approach for natural medicine and Dr Philippe Roch reporting on the inferences that could be drawn by studying invertebrates to possibly replace antibiotics. Edwin himself gave a lecture, demonstrating the power of earthworms in his presentation titled 'From basic science to antimicrobial and anti-cancer molecules.' His keen interest in basic immunology was visible throughout. Dr Mepur Ravindranath gave a lively presentation on the potential tools to assess the efficacy of anti-cancer immune responses and enhancers, while Shinji Kasahara presented a treatise on neuroendocrine-immune systems as targets for CAM. The role of CAM as a preventive medicine was highlighted in Dr Toru Abo's lecture on the autoimmune system and in Dr Aristo Vojdani's discussion on a CAM approach to infections and the role of xenobiotics in diagnosing and preventing diseases. Dr Shoji Shimizu presented his collaborative work with Dr Yamaguchi on the beneficial effects of hot spring bathing on the immune system.

Moving to clinical application, Dr Alice Roberts' work on GABA receptors and inflammatory skin disorders smoothly transitioned into dermatologist Dr Hiromi Kobayashi's talk of her life work aimed at healing the growing number of cases of atopic dermatitis using nutritional and Kampo therapies. We lithely moved from the happy event of birth in Dr Michel Tournaire's lecture on alternative therapies during labor and delivery to Dr Kazuo Komiyama's words on CAM in dental care. Dr Andrea Cossarizza's work on CAM for the treatment of HIV infection was a reminder of how CAM can be a viable therapy against a much dreaded disease that only a short while ago was considered a death sentence.

Demonstrating the passage of CAM from the East to the West, two doctors from England and the United States, Drs Michael Irwin and Peter White, discussed truly Eastern therapies such as *Tai Chi Chih* and its effect on Varicella-Zoster

virus specific immunity and acupuncture and whether it was superior to placebo intervention. Dr Arnie Loel closed the last speaker session of the symposium with food for thought, 'The alternative medicine of today may not be the complementary therapy of tomorrow'. With that, the scientists put their presentations away in their suitcases and braced themselves for our last evening of food and festivities. Martin Richardson had arrived from Oxford and had a visible yet gentle presence along with Toyoshi Onji from Tokyo. The next day was devoted to the discussion of the possibility of a new journal, its name, and its concept.

The day began very early for me, as I raced in a taxi from my mountain house, managing copying materials at a convenience store on the way. Would this meeting be a birthing of a new journal or would we just say that it had been a very interesting endeavor, organizing this meeting of minds? From Edwin's opening words, I sensed a certain momentum that grew as the meeting progressed. After two days of meetings, the participants were now accustomed to each other and easily bantered back and forth with opinions both optimistic and pessimistic. There was excitement in the air as these experts from all over the world openly shared their ideas on this proposal for a new journal on CAM. Martin and Toyoshi watched the proceedings with smiles on their faces. It would be months before Oxford University Press gave their final stamp of approval, but the symposium had brought us closer. Presently, the proceedings are in press at Kluwer Publishers.

In a famous Native American legend, the energy of the movement of a dancing rabbit generates the creation of humankind. All those who participated in the symposium provided the energy that would gain momentum and evolve into a new creation, an international journal *eCAM* that was envisioned several years ago.

Evidence-based Complementary and Alternative Medicine (*eCAM*)

About a year later, Fall 2003, the autumn colors are being washed away by the cold November rain. As western Japan prepares for winter, our long journey around Japan and Taiwan comes to an end. The activities listed below were accompanied by one or two banquets every single day. In accordance with the popular Taiwanese belief that eating brings good health, even the coffee sessions at the 12th International Congress for Oriental Medicine provided a delectable spread of food (see detailed meeting report in this issue). The following itinerary will give you an idea of the scheduled events:

During the weeks of October 24 to November 9, 2003, we worked hard to recruit outstanding papers. We visited professors engaged in fascinating new CAM research: Dr Chiharu Kubo in Kyushu University, Fukuoka prefecture, Dr Katsutoshi Terasawa of Toyama Medical University, one of the cradles of Japanese traditional medicine in Japan and Dr Nobutaka Suzuki and Dr Masaki Inoue of Kanazawa University. Dr Cooper gave a lecture at Kanazawa Medical Univer-

sity and he, Professor Yamaguchi and I were interviewed by the Hokkoku Newspaper which published pictures and an essay. In Yamanashi Prefecture, Dr Cooper also lectured at the Ohbiken Company in Kofu of Yamanashi Prefecture. The company, headed by President Isao Horiuchi, specializes in a health product made of *Agaricus blazei* mushroom. In Tokyo, we met with Toyoshi Onji and other members of the OUP staff, and also held meetings with Professor Ko Okumura and Dr Kazuyoshi Takeda of Juntendo University and Dr Haruki Yamada of Kitasato University and Founding Editor Emeritus Tomio Tada (formerly of Tokyo University). Professor Tada was in good spirits and had just completed an insightful editorial for our first issue. From Tokyo, we traveled to Taiwan to attend the 12th International Congress of Oriental Medicine. Dr Chen Chieh-Fu (also an *eCAM*

Editorial Board member) (see detailed meeting report this issue) presided over the excellent congress that was filled with many activities from stately opening ceremonies to concerts at the beautiful concert hall in Taipei. Researchers gathered from all over Asia, with simultaneous translation available for Korean, Japanese, Chinese and English. We were all impressed by the high-powered research that we hope to draw into the pages of *eCAM*. Dr Yamaguchi presented several papers, and he and Dr Cooper also chaired sessions. Martin Richardson and Emiko Okuda set up a booth for Oxford University Press that included flyers about *eCAM* (fresh off the press and featuring our beautiful new cover). (See other reports for recruiting activities through 2003). Many miles had been covered and the launch was truly underway. Heartfelt thanks to all, *arigatou gozaimashita*.