



Report on the International Symposium on Suboptimal Health Status, Inner Mongolia

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The International Symposium on Sub-optimal Health Status was held in the beautiful “deer city” of Baotou, Inner Mongolia, China, from September 12 to September 13, 2015. The symposium was hosted by Global Suboptimal Health Association and Capital Medical University and was cosponsored by the Beijing Municipal Key Laboratory of Clinical Epidemiology, Baotou Central Hospital, and Ruike-Donghua Translational Medicine Center, Beijing.

The theme of this meeting was suboptimal health status (SHS), a physical state between health and disease, which is characterized by: (1) the perception of health complaints, general weakness, and low energy within a period of 3 months and (2) a subclinical, reversible stage of chronic disease [1–3]. SHS is the prime time for preventive, predictive, and personalized medicine (PPPM) in terms of health intervention [4]. Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) shows great advantages in the application of PPPM.

More than 300 health professionals from China’s Ministry of Science and Technology, the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, the Chinese Academy of Traditional Medicine, and the local Baotou municipal government and physicians and students from medical universities and hospitals in Anhui, Beijing, Hebei, Inner Mongolia, Shanghai, Shanxi, Zhejiang, and other regions of China attended the meeting. Especially, some important and distinguished representatives of the Chinese Academy and

the European Commission and scholars from Australia, Canada, and Germany participated in the meeting.

This symposium provided a platform for participants to exchange their research on SHS, health management, TCM, and PPPM and to encourage the application of TCM in health care practice. To promote the advantages of TCM, we discussed the potential value of TCM in the innovative context of PPPM.

The topics focused on policy making at the national and local governmental levels for the promotion of SHS and PPPM, application of TCM in primary care, study of Chinese herbs, health care products, community-based health promotion, clinical epidemiological studies, and integration of TCM with modern technology (e.g., gene knockout, genomics, proteomics, metabolomics, glycomics, and whole-genome sequencing) from the perspectives of SHS and PPPM [5]. In this symposium we aimed to set up a novel approach and education projects supporting TCM–PPPM hybrid technologies for advancing diagnostic and treatment strategies in health care.

The conference was reported by newspapers and Baotou City TV News in Inner Mongolia. Olga Golubnitschaja (Secretary-General, European Association for Predictive, Preventive and Personalised Medicine; Editor-in-Chief of *EPMA Journal*,

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which is the global leader in reporting the close relationship between TCM and PPPM), David Zakus (Editor in-Chief of *Planetary Health Weekly*, Ryerson University, Canada), and Wei Wang (Fellow, Faculty of Public Health, Royal College of Physicians, UK; Edith Cowan University, Australia; Editor-in-Chief of *Family Medicine and Community Health*) were invited to give wonderful speeches at the conference. They shared their experiences of SHS and PPPM.

Olga Golubnitschaja discussed TCM with local scholars and confirmed the important roles of TCM for SHS and PPPM. *EPMA Journal* will publish a special issue on SHS and TCM this year.

David Zakus reported this international conference in *Planetary Health Weekly* (<https://www.dropbox.com/s/3ne6gb39xqjvb9d/PHW%20Vol%201%20Issue%2028%20September%2017%202015.pdf?dl=0>), and Wei Wang published the population-based clinical or community cohort studies on SHS and PPPM affirming the scientific value of a special Mongolian ethnic population cohort study in Baotou for chronic disease prevention and control.

A special progress report on the China Suboptimal Health Cohort Study (COACS) (<http://www.coacs.com.cn/>) was presented during the symposium. The COACS is a population-based, prospective, long-term follow-up cohort study with 9078 participants. The study has two phases: cross-sectional and longitudinal. In the first, cross-sectional phase, all participants had taken the SHS survey with the Suboptimal Health Questionnaire-25 (SHSQ-25) and underwent a routine health check and laboratory tests in parallel with collection of their demographic data. In the ongoing, second phase, a long-term clinical follow up has been performed with the purpose of better understanding the interaction between genetic, behavioral, and environmental factors for noncommunicable chronic disease (e.g., cardiovascular disease, stroke, and cancer). Current data analysis is focusing on more than 4000 individuals who completed the SHSQ-25 and underwent laboratory tests. Thus the COACS will provide unique resources for collaborations on SHS and PPPM.

At the closing ceremony the symposium committee expressed its sincere gratitude to the conference participants

and encouraged all participants to promote SHS and TCM in their communities and academic institutes. The symposium participants were convinced of the unique opportunities and great prospects for innovative biomedical science and advanced health care services which a bilateral Chinese–European collaboration may provide.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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