



Debate and Convergence: A Study on the Problem of Disease Names in Chinese and Western Medicine during the Republic of China Period

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Abstract. During the Republic of China period, the confusion of disease names between Chinese and Western medicine not only seriously affected the normal development of medical practice and the progress of medicine, but also sparked a prolonged debate between Chinese and Western medicine around disease names. There is also an appeal in the medical community to integrate the names of Chinese and Western medical diseases. After the establishment of the Central National Medical Center, Shi Jinmo formally launched the movement of unifying the disease names in 1933, hoping to unify disease names of traditional Chinese medicine and Western medicine. At this time, the Chinese nation was in a critical situation and the proposal faced widespread opposition, ultimately only being implemented in the form of a comparison between Chinese and Western disease names. This compromise shows a strong tension in local medicine. The debate and convergence between modern Chinese medicine and western medicine around the name of diseases are not only the conflict and adjustment of the discourse power of Chinese medicine and western medicine, but also an attempt by the Chinese medicine community to rise up in a special period to strengthen national and cultural identity.

Keywords: Traditional Chinese and western medicine; Disease names; Debate; Convergence.

1 Introduction

Thanks to the development of bacteriology, virology and other knowledge, western pathology has developed rapidly, and many disease names have been reconstructed according to the cognition of pathology. In contrast, traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) focuses more on symptoms in terms of disease cognition. The different theories of Chinese and Western medicine lead to the great differences in the naming of diseases, which has become an important field of modern traditional Chinese and Western medicine debate and convergence. The dispute and convergence between Chinese and Western medicine around the construction of disease names are a game between the

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Z. Zhan et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the 2024 10th International Conference on Humanities and Social Science Research (ICHSSR 2024)*, Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research 858,

https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-277-4_114

two around the power of medical knowledge. Many scholars [1-2] have done relevant studies on the integration of traditional Chinese and Western medicine and the unification of modern medical terms for individual diseases.

The naming of disease of Chinese and Western medicine is a key to resolve the communication and conflict problems between Chinese and Western medicine in modern times. How to observe the connotation and extension of this issue, and further promote relevant research from the whole, especially in the context of the loss of national sovereignty and anti-colonial struggle? From the perspective of the whole, this paper tries to discuss the dispute and mutual learning of Chinese and Western medical disease names, and deeply explore the complex interaction mechanism behind it.

2 Debate of Disease Names Between Chinese and Western Medicine

The debate on disease names of modern Chinese and Western medicine reflects the great difference in the theory of traditional Chinese and Western medicine. When explaining the difference between anthrax and cancer, Ruohuai, lamented that Chinese medicine is extensive and profound in the selection of disease names, "Although there is no anatomy and microscopy, the symptoms listed are very close" [3]. Xu Shangzhi, who is committed to the research of the basic theory of TCM, said, "Our country has fully grasped the precision of Western diagnosis, the meticulousness of health administration, and the severity of disinfection and isolation"[4]. But Xu Shichang, who trained in Chinese medicine, insisted that Western medicine is inferior to Chinese medicine in naming some diseases [5]. At this time, Western medicine attacked the disadvantage of generalities of TCM in diagnosing the name of the disease.

Xu Shangzhi is not the only one who support the above view, the famous TCM scientist Shi Yiren also believed, "Chinese diagnostics are extensive and profound." At the same time, Shi Yiren, a Chinese medicine scientist, insisted, "In our country, diagnosis is known as fine, but few doctors are hasty and careless, so that TCM is often mocked by Western medicine" [6]. In the naming of diseases, the TCM theory believes that "six sex" and "six qi" are the core factors causing diseases, Chinese medicine believes that the function of "qi" and bacteria in traditional Chinese medicine books are similar, and there is no difference between them in theory. A famous doctor Tang Gouyu who comes from Hunan Province considered that the difference between Chinese and Western medicine is: "Western medicine attaches importance to material, Chinese medicine attaches importance to qi, in fact, the matter cannot be separated from the qi, the qi cannot be independent from the material" [7]. However, Dr. Chen Woufu objected to the idea and said: "Regardless of the fact that the six qi cannot be used as a standard to customize the name of the disease, even if the six qi can be used to formulate the name of the disease, it is not possible to dominate all the names of the disease" [8].

Based on the reasons above, modern Chinese and Western medicine first launched a game around the use of disease names in the process of medical practice. Dr. Jiang Shaosong objected to Western medicine's use of TCM names when diagnose diseases

for patients. Jiang believed that in order to strengthen people's faith in Western medicine, the first thing should be consistent with the name and reality [9]. There are also some Western doctors believe that the diagnosis of Chinese medicine sometimes “only knows the old methods”, and uses some old names of Chinese medicine to deceive patients, which is tantamount to “a blind man riding a blind horse in the deep pool in the middle of the night, which is not enough to compare his danger” [10].

Chinese medicine believes that the dispute between Chinese and Western disease names is related to cultural self-confidence and national self-esteem. The main owner of Thin Yin Hall believes that the root of the dispute is that “in modern times, people hate the old things, even if a disease name, they prefer the new, so they choose to use the disease name of Western medicine regardless of the inherent disease name of TCM.” He called it “a betrayal of one's ancestors, and nothing could be more humiliating” [11]. Wu Hanxian also opposes the simple comparison of Chinese and Western medicine names, and believes that the name of the disease “should be based on Chinese medicine”, if “based on Western medicine”, it is “self-destruction of Chinese medicine, self-loss of national identity” behavior [12]. Chinese medicine even considers Western medicine's expansion on the issue of disease names as a tool of imperialist colonization, so it reacts more fiercely on this issue.

3 The Call for Disease Names Unity in Medical Community

At the beginning of the introduction of Western medicine into China, in order to promote the process of localization of Western medicine, missionaries chose to prioritize the use of TCM when translating medical terms. However, due to the lack of people and institutions to coordinate translation, the translation of medical terms is very confusing. “Chinese medical students often feel distressed about this, and Western missionaries also regard it as a pity” [13]. Under this background, the Medical Association established a medical terminology review committee, but the association did not translate many medical books, and “many of the translated medical terminology are not suitable for daily use, so “it must be improved” [14].

The medical community believes that the disease names of Chinese and Western are confused, and if they are not unified, it is difficult to promote medical progress. In 1916, the famous doctor Yu Fengbin discussed how to make the Eastern academic independence: “The path of academic independence of Chinese medicine is different, and the unified term is the first way” [15]. In view of this situation, the medical missionary Gao Shilan shouted that the unification of the disease names is urgent, and that if the name of the disease is not unified, medical progress will inevitably be greatly affected [16]. Most doctors believe that the confusion of disease names affects the spread and acceptance of Western medicine in China [17]. In 1928, Zhao Qinbo, who was a military doctor, lamented that the estrangement of medical names was an important reason why Western medicine was difficult to gain people's faith based on his own medical experience [18].

To sum up, the mixed names of modern Chinese and western diseases are widely criticized by the medical community. In modern China, the medical names of western

medicine are divided into two systems, which are translated by missionaries and translated by students studying in Japan. The two systems have long been competing for the right to speak, so that the two medical names have long been parallel. But Chinese medicine is limited by its own theory, and its disease names also have a disadvantage of confusion. The mixed use of disease names of modern Chinese and Western medicine has caused serious impact on the progress of Chinese medicine, and the call for the unification of disease names in the medical circle is also rising.

4 Beginning and End of Unified Disease Names Movement Launched by Shi Jinmo

On March 17, 1931, the Central Medical Center was officially established, and on May 3 in the same year, the board of directors elected Jiao Yitang as the director, and Chen Yu and Shi Jinmo as the deputy directors [19]. After the establishment of the organization, under the guidance of the idea of “scientific Chinese medicine”, the academic collation of Chinese medicine was promoted. Under the appeal of doctors, in 1933, Shi Jinmo, then deputy director of the Central Medical Center, submitted the Proposal of the Central Medical Center Academic Sorting Association to unify the disease names. The proposal proposed to replace or unify the medical names of traditional Chinese medicine with those of Western medicine, and strictly ordered doctors all over the country to abide by this regulation, not to use the medical names of TCM, and severely punished those who violate it, and those who do not correct after punishment will be disqualified from practicing medicine and banned from practicing medicine[20]. Shi Jinmo believed that science and truth are the only one in the world, and the name of Western medicine was based on science. It is not in line with scientific principles if the new created disease names are different from Western medicine” [21]. Shi Jinmo considered that the substantive diseases of Western medicine are named based on anatomy, infectious diseases are named from bacteriology, which fully demonstrates the scientific name of Western medicine [22]. If the names of TCM diseases are different from those of Western medicine, then the names of TCM diseases are naturally incompatible with science.

It can be imagined how fierce the opposition of the Chinese medicine community was when Shi Jinmo put forward this radical proposal. The Shanghai Chinese Medical Association sent a letter to the Central Chinese Medical Center, questioning Shi Jinmo's proposal and arguing that the proposal has no realistic possibility of implementation. In order to make the proposer and his supporters withdraw from the difficulties, the Shanghai Chinese Medical Association even publicly questioned the qualifications of the proposer, and even attacked the proposer's sinister intentions. It is said that the proposal is ostensibly to unify the names of TCM with the names of Western medicine diseases, but it is actually aimed at eliminating Chinese medicine. Finally, it is pointed out that if the name of Western medicine is unified, the country can set up more Western medicine colleges, and the central Chinese medical center should be abolished [23]. After the proposal was introduced, there were many clear voices against the convergence of Chinese and Western medical names, and the opponents were mainly Chinese medicine

groups. Xia Yingtang and others argued that the movement not only cut the feet to fit the shoes, but also gave up eating for fear of choking, and overthrew all the books on Chinese medicine, which was more poisonous than Qin Shihuang's intention to burn books and bury scholars" [24]. Cao Weizun believed that to unify the name of Chinese medicine with Western medicine will lead to greater confusion [25]. Chen Huanyun [26] considered that the act of forcibly unifying the name of TCM disease with the name of Western medicine disease is tantamount to abandoning domestic products and using foreign products.

Due to the overwhelming feelings of opponents, the movement of unifying the disease names of TCM by Western medicine was temporarily shelved, and it had to settle for the next best thing, choosing to collate the names for diseases in the form of comparing Chinese and Western names. Lu Yuanlei, the initiator of the movement, also gradually became more conservative. Shi Jinmo's proposal to unify the disease names started after the "918" incident. At a time when the people feel the loss of sovereignty, the proposal will sting the sensitive nerves of the people again without doubt. When the proposal began to push forward, it also encountered a large-scale Japanese invasion of China. Shi Jinmo had no choice to compromise with reality, and chose to end this grand proposition in the form of a comparison of Chinese and Western medical names.

5 Conclusions

During the republican period, the debate on the disease names of Chinese and Western medicine mainly focused on the differences of diagnostic techniques between Chinese and Western medicine, the principles and characteristics of naming diseases. The debate eventually reached the scientific, cultural and even national levels. At the same time of the debate on the name of diseases of Chinese and Western medicine, there is also a strong realistic demand for the convergence of disease names. Western medicine needs the unification of disease names to create a more relaxed environment to promote its dissemination, while TCM needs scientific terminology to improve its theory, the unification of disease names seems to be an inevitable trend. It is for this reason that the unified name movement initiated by the Central National Medical Center, represented by Shi Jinmo and Lu Yuanlei, has become a mainstream ideology implemented with official acquiescence.

The movement of unifying disease names were enforced by the Central National Medical Center which was an official body. On one hand, taking the collection of TCM study as a starting point to establish its leading position in local TCM institutions and groups. On the other hand, starting with the unification of TCM disease names with Western medicine terms, the final establishment of the status of Western medicine was promoted by forcefully suppressing the status of Chinese medicine. Without accident, the official reliance on power to impose its will has also led to active resistance from local TCM groups. In addition to petitioning the national government, the resistance of the TCM groups also launched a huge public opinion offensive. This incident happened

at the time of the loss of national sovereignty, and the TCM community cleverly combined the struggle with anti-colonialism, which not only enhanced the voice of their own struggle, but also enhanced the justice of their own struggle to some extent.

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