

PHYSICAL CHECKING AND DIAGNOSIS IN THAI TRADITIONAL MEDICINE.

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ABSTRACT

The qualitative research was to 1) study the physical checking and diagnosis in Thai Traditional Medicine from the plenty of Thai Traditional Medicine textbooks, and 2) compare the methods of physical checking and diagnosis in Thai Traditional Medicine between Thai Traditional Medicine healers and textbooks. The research samples were six Thai Traditional Medicine healers and a modern doctor that were gathered by purposive sampling technique including five Thai Traditional Medicine textbooks. This research was worked from April to August 2015 which the tools used in the research were a voice recorder, interview, camera and data notebook. The research findings revealed that the physical checking and diagnosis techniques from Thai Traditional Medicine healers and textbooks were exactly the same. The techniques began with the physical checking of pulse beat of Wata, Pitta and Samha (or sputum), face, skin, eyes and mouth, next proved the causes of illness, consumption behavior, working status, lifestyle, element imbalance, season, age, time and environment might cause the illness. The results from Thai Traditional Medicine healers and textbooks revealed the technique of physical checking was consisted of inquiring, observing and touching. However, the differences between Thai Traditional Medicine healers and textbooks were that Thai Traditional Medicine healers did not check for blood pressure but they checked for palms and ankles in order to take the temperature, directly pressed a pain spot on the palm, examined the elements of Chaoreun (base elements) and fertilization to see the weakness of health. The differences between Thai Traditional Medicine practitioners and textbooks can contribute to the development of physical checking and diagnosis in Thai Traditional Medicine.

Keywords: physical checking, diagnosis, Thai traditional medicine

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, Thai Traditional Medicine service has been widespread both in Thailand and international area. Healthcare service centers organized by the government and private organization have provided care services based on a wide variety of knowledge which may cause misunderstanding. Processes of physical checking and diagnosis by following Thai Traditional Medicine are one of the care functions in the government care service centers. Sometimes, care service by Thai Traditional Medicine theory is not based on academic knowledge which a practitioner has not have enough information for diagnosis because Thai Traditional Medicine theories have mentioned the diseases and symptoms that related to “Samuttathan scripture” but there have not analyzed the causes of disease.

Thai Traditional Medicine is a choice to solve health problems in Thai society. Thai Traditional Medicine is a medical process that follows the folk ideas of health treatment from older persons. Thai Traditional Medicine theory believes that human illness is come from the natural causes; Etiology or Samuttathan is the first place of disease that composed of Age (Ayu-Samuttathan), Time (Kanla-Samuttathan), Season (Utu-Samuttathan), and Environment (Pratessa-Samuttathan).

Thus, the researcher would like to study the physical checking and diagnosis by following Thai Traditional Medicine Theory because it is a main point of etiology to explore the causes of disease. This research will collect the ideas of Thai Traditional Medicine theory from five scriptures that are Ayurveda Study (Thai Traditional Medicine) by Khun Nithassukkij (Phumchosri, N. 1973), Thai Traditional Medicine Theory by Sukhothai Thammathirat University (2005), Thai Traditional Medicine by Wat Phra Chettuphon Wimon Mangkhalaram's Folk Medicine (1961), Phraya Pisanuprasartwet's Medicine Theory, and Folk Medicine (Thai Traditional Medicine Book 1) (2006).

Furthermore, the research will compare the Thai Traditional Medicine by five scriptures with the interview records of Thai Traditional Medicine practices by Thai Traditional Medicine practitioners who experienced in Thai Traditional Medicine treatment for more than ten years.

OBJECTIVE

There were 2 main objectives in this research.

1. To study the physical checking and diagnosis in Thai Traditional Medicine from the plenty of Thai Traditional Medicine textbooks.
2. To compare the methods of physical checking and diagnosis in Thai Traditional Medicine between Thai Traditional Medicine healers and textbooks.

SCOPE OF RESEARCH

1) Scope of population

The research samples were seven Thai Traditional Medicine experts who have experienced in Thai Traditional Medicine for more than ten years. One of all were a modern physician.

2) Scope of time

Data was collected from April to August 2015.

3) Scope of content

This research concentrated on gathering Thai Traditional Medicine from five textbooks - Ayurveda Study (Thai Traditional Medicine) by Khun Nithassukkij (Phumchosri, N. 1973), Thai Traditional Medicine Theory by Sukhothai Thammathirat University (2005), Thai Traditional Medicine by Wat Phra Chettuphon Wimon Mangkhalaram's Folk Medicine (1961), Phraya Pisanuprasartwet's Medicine Theory, and Folk Medicine (Thai Traditional Medicine Book 1) (2006), as well as seven experts in Thai Traditional Medicine.

METHODOLOGY

This research employed qualitative techniques using documentary resources and in-depth interview. The research gathered data from primary and secondary sources such as Thai Traditional scriptures, textbooks, academic journals, and the related researches and a record of interviews. The in-depth interview was a research tool for data collection and analysis. The source of research and criteria were as follows.

A. Selection criteria

- I. Textbooks or scripture must relate to Thai Traditional Medicine.
- II. Interviewees must be Thai Traditional Medicine healers who have experienced in Thai Traditional Medicine for more than ten years.
- III. Interviewees must pass and get Thai Traditional Medicine Licenses.

B. Method of selection

- I. Requested for interviewees to healthcare service centers where provide Thai Traditional Medicine.
- II. Requested for interviewees to Department of Thai Traditional Medicine, Songkhla Nakarin University.
- III. Requested for interviewees to Thai Traditional Medicine Council.

C. Research Tools

The research used a recorder, camera, and notebook.

D. Data collection

The research collected the data from five scriptures as follows.

- I. Ayurveda Study (Thai Traditional Medicine) by Khun Nithassukkij (Phumchosri, N. 1973).
- II. Thai Traditional Medicine Theory by Sukhothai Thammathirat University (2005).
- III. Thai Traditional Medicine by Wat Phra Chettuphon Wimon Mangkhalaram's Folk Medicine (1961).
- IV. Phraya Pisanuprasartwet's Medicine Theory.
- V. Folk Medicine (Thai Traditional Medicine Book 1) (2006), as well as seven experts in Thai Traditional Medicine.

E. Data analysis

The collected data were compared between ideas in the scriptures and data from the in-depth interviews in order to find out the similarity and differences of physical checking and diagnosis in Thai Traditional Medicine.

RESEARCH RESULT

The research results from in-depth interview were as follows.

Expert 1: Mr. Prakob Ubonkao is a Thai Traditional Medicine healer who was born in 1929 (86 years old). He lived in 65 Damrongpattana Road, Jana District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. He got the master's degree of Public Health from Songkhla Rajabhat University and license of Thai Traditional Medicine both in Thai Pharmacy and Thai Traditional Medicine. About Thai Traditional Medicine background, he came to be a Thai Traditional Medicine healer because his mother was a Thai herbal pharmacist. He has experienced in Thai herbs since 1976. Three years later, he treated the first patient by Thai Traditional Medicine Theory. He has expertized in hemorrhoids, diabetes, hypertension, fever, diarrhea, herpes, shingles (herpes zoster), arthritis etc. He has treated almost 300 patients per month.

Expert 2: Mr. Somporn Charnvanitsakul was born in 1940 (75 years old). He lived in 1/2 Moo 2, Rattaphum Subdistrict, Kwuan-niang District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. He got the high diploma from Nathawee Vocational College and had Thai Traditional Medicine Licenses of Thai Pharmacy, and Thai Traditional Medicine. About Thai Traditional Medicine background, his mother and father used Thai herbs for solving their health problems so that he had been known Thai herbs for long times. When he was 10 years old, he stumbled and got a wound where he healed himself by using Siam weed leaf. He got better anyway; thus, he was interested in Thai Traditional Medicine. He healed the first patient by Thai Traditional Medicine in 1960. He has expertized in diarrhea, arthritis, herpes, shingles, constipation, faint, skin problems, etc. About patients, he has healed around 200 patients per month.

Expert 3: Mr. Nhom Ratchakaew was in 1963 (52 years old). He lived in 69/1 Moo 1, Sapanmaikan Subdistrict, Jana District, Songkhla Province, Thailand. His educational level was in Grade 8. About Thai Traditional Medicine background, he came to be a Thai Traditional Medicine practitioner as his grandfather has ever asked him to seek Thai herbs everyday so that he was interested in Thai herbs. When he was nine years old, he coincidentally began a healer as his grandfather did not stay at home and there was a patient with high flu so that he took care of this patient with Thai herbs. The patient felt better from his treatment eventually. Furthermore, when he was 17 years old, his wife was weakened by herniated disc and breast cancer so that he paid attention to study Thai Traditional Medicine and healed his wife until she got well. His methods were popular which he was accepted by other people. He has expertized in hemorrhoids, diabetes, hypertension, cancer, liver disease, faint, skin problem, fever, diarrhea, herpes, shingles (herpes zoster), arthritis, stomach disease, lung disease, etc. He has treated almost 100 patients per month.

Expert 4: Mr. Prayoth Jaipet was born in 1959 (56 years old). He lived in 132 Bangprom Road, Talingchun District, Bangkok, Thailand. He graduated from Sukhothai Thammathirath University, Nonthaburi, Thailand. He also got Thai Traditional Medicine Licenses of Thai Pharmacy, Thai Traditional Medicine, Thai midwife and Thai massage. About Thai Traditional Medicine background, he was interested in Thai Traditional Medicine because he did not believe in modern medicine and Ms. Pennapha Sabjaroen invited him to study at Thai Traditional Medicine Foundation at Ministry of Public Health. He has expertized in midwife diseases, hemorrhoids, flu, cough, herpes, shingles, faint, muscle problems, skin problems, stroke, hypertension, etc. He has treated almost 100 patients per month.

Expert 5: Mr. Komsun Thinnakorn Na Ayutthaya was born in 1964 (52 years old). He lived in 25/706 Jangwattana Road, Pakkret, Nonthaburi Province, Thailand. He got master's degree (emeritus) of Thai Traditional Medicine from College of Allied Health Sciences, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University and Thai Traditional Medicine licenses of Thai Pharmacy and Thai Traditional Medicine. About Thai Traditional Medicine background, he was 6th heir of Thinnakorn family. His family was Thai Traditional Medicine healers who have treated patients with Thai herbs for long times. He has experienced and worked with his family since he was young. He began a Thai Traditional Medicine healer since 1991 when he was 27 years old. He has treated patients with hemorrhoids, midwife diseases, diarrhea, herpes, faint, skin problems, alimentary canal system problems, lean problems, flu, fever, cough, etc. About his patients, he has healed more than 1,000 patient a month.

Expert 6: Mr. Thanapol Kongnoi was born in 1950 (66 years old). He lived in 53/40 Moo 4, Bangpeung, Phra Pradaeng, Samut Prakarn Province, Thailand. He graduated a diploma degree from Chumpol Navy School and got Thai Traditional Medicine License of Midwife, Thai Pharmacy, Thai Traditional Medicine, and Thai massage. About Thai Traditional Medicine background, when he was 21 years old, he was interested in Thai herbs so that he went to Doctor Boonsong's school in Ang-thong Province for studying Thai Traditional Medicine. He started his Thai Traditional Medicine practice by assisting his lecturer to collect herbs and hard studying the Thai Traditional Medicine Scriptures. When he was 38 years old, a patient with stroke wanted to treat with him but he had not got the license yet so that he moved to Thai Traditional Medicine Foundation at Ministry of Public Health of Thailand invited by Doctor Pennapha Sabjaroen. After that, he began a Thai healer who has expertized

in diabetes, hemorrhoids, faint, stroke, hypertension, etc. His patients a month was around 300 patients.

Expert 7: Miss Punnarai Kullasath was born in 1975 (40 years old). She lived in Bangkok, Thailand. She was a modern doctor who graduated bachelor's degree of Medicine from Chiang Mai University. She worked at Chonburi Hospital. Even she was a modern doctor, she was interested in Thai Traditional Medicine and Thai herbs because she would not like her patients have chemical side effects from modern medicinal treatment. She would like to treat her patients with both modern and Thai Medicine methods. She has expertized in alimentary canal system problems and prescribed Thai herb tabs. She has 400 patients a month.

The five experts would check and diagnosed in Thai Traditional Medicine method by starting as follows.

1. Four elements checking

- I. Earth element checks began with skin checking. The healer would see patient's hair, teeth, nail, skin and double checked with date and time of birth to ensure the patient's birth element (elements of Chaoreun). Next, checked bone, skin tissue, heart, liver, kidney, lung, alimentary system, brain, and uterus. The experts pressed on those points and saw the normality.

- II. Water element checks such as neck (Sorsaled), heart (Urasale), stool (Kuthsaled).

- III. Wind element checks such as methods of wind flow up (Konglomputkhenbo), wind flow down (Konglomputlonglang), wind in the stomach (Konglumnaisai), wind out the stomach (Konglumnoksai), body wind (Konglom-oon-kai), and breath (Konglomhaijai)

- IV. Fire element checks such as methods of blood checking – see skin, check pulse, touch on stomach, etc.

2. Ten main points checking of “Summana point” “Point of Kongdallakun” , “Point of Kantaree“ (leaf-right direction), “Point of Kantaree” Up-down direction, “Point of Sikkinee, “Point of Sukhumung”, “Point of Sunthakart” , “Point of e-tha” , “Point of Pingkhla”

3. Three system checking such as Pitta, Wata, Sputum.

Diagnosis in Thai Traditional Medicine

1. Diagnosis by Zodiac (Jakkarasi Samuttathan) – a healer asked about date and time of birth of the baby patient, and how long baby lived in a womb in order to find out main element of Thai Traditional Medicine.

2. Diagnosis by Age (Ayu-Samuttathan)

3. Diagnosis by Time (Kanla-Samuttathan) – a healer asked a patient about where a patient was born and lived in, then linked to the causes of disease.

4. Diagnosis by Season (Uta-Samuttathan) and Environment (Pratessa-Samuttathan) – a healer asked about how long the disease was caused in order to find out where the causes of disease occur.

5. Diagnosis by occupation – a healer asked about patient's occupation to recheck a worry in workplace.

6. Diagnosis by basic symptom checking.

The results of Thai Traditional Medicine method from interview and textbooks started by the physical checking such as background check, pulse check, heart check, emotional check, and asking about symptom and feeling.

Case study I: Patient with constipation

Background checking:

Patient was a woman who was 64 years old. She got married and worked as a farmer. She lived in Songkhla Province, Thailand. She came to see a Thai Traditional Medicine healer on 4th April 2018 at 2.00 PM.

Physical checking and diagnosis in Thai Traditional Medicine:

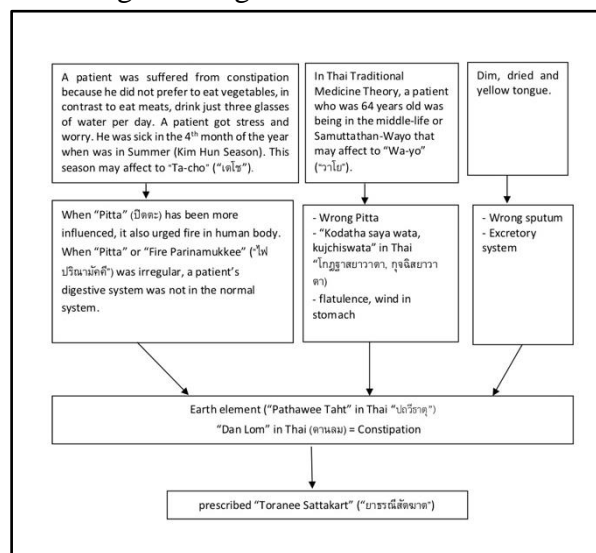
A healer started with pulse checking and found that “Pitta” was irregular and harder than “Wata” and “Samha” or sputum. A healer diagnosed that she had a problem with excretory system where wind flew up in her stomach so that she felt tired and weak. Then, a healer asked about her background and symptom; she said that she suffered from constipation. She took long time in a restroom for shitting. About her consumption, she did not like to consume vegetables and always ate meats. She drank three glasses of water a day, worked in her farm, not exercised. A healer found that her tongue was dim, dried, and yellow. A healer also touched on her body and found a chunk above navel, when knocked on that point found that there was wind in the stomach. A healer diagnosed that she was with constipation or “Dan Lom”

A healer recommended that a patient should eat more vegetables and fruits such as morning glory, water mimosa, and drink much glasses of water in order to stimulate the excretory system, avoid foods with hot, spicy and sour and took a medicine for seven days. Before going to bed, a patient should pray. A healer also suggested that once she got well, she must provide meal to the temple or make a merit.

A healer prescribed “Toranee Sattakart” for a patient to take before going to bed.

Figure 1

Flowchart of physical checking and diagnosis in Thai Traditional Medicine – Case study I



Case study II: Patient with liver problem

Background checking:

Patient was a man who was 55 years old. He got married and worked as a government officer. He lived in Pattanee Province, Thailand. He came to see a Thai Traditional Medicine practitioner on 5th April 2018 at 10.00 AM.

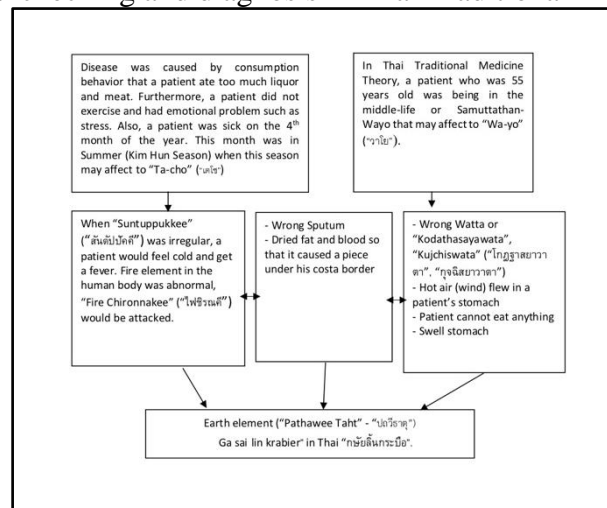
Physical checking and diagnosis in Thai Traditional Medicine:

A healer started with pulse checking and saw on his palm and found that “Pitta” was shaking harder and there was swell and pain on his thumb – an area link to his liver. A patient felt bad on his side. He drank a lot of liquor, ate meat, and worried about his family. He slept not well, did not exercise. His eyes and body were yellow, big stomach. He had a big piece under his costa border. A healer analyzed by following Thai Traditional Medicine theory that he had a problem with liver “cirrhosis of liver” – called “Gasai-lin-krabier”

A healer recommended that this disease was caused by consumption behavior and emotional problem. A patient drank too much wine, had high level of stress, and less rested a day so that these were directly affected to his physical health. A patient should stop drinking any liquor, avoid eating meats and seafood, sweet foods, and took a prescribed tab. A healer provided a set of Thai herbs which was composed of Grip weed, Caesar weed, Nut grass, Little ironweed, Canna Lily, Draceana loureirin Gagnep (Chan Daeng), Willughbeia edulis Roxb. (Thao Kui), Smilacaceae for a patient to boil and drink its water.

Figure 2

Flowchart of physical checking and diagnosis in Thai Traditional Medicine – Case study II



DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTION

The results from Thai Traditional Medicine healers and textbooks revealed that the technique of physical checking was consisted of inquiring, observing and touching. Diagnosis by Thai Traditional Medicine started with background checking by asking about patient’s history such as date and time of birth in order to ensure base element, consumption behavior, work status, residence, occupation and environment to analyze the causes of problem, then observed any irregularity on skin, eyes, hair, teeth, nails, and also checked physical and emotional health. With similarity between Thai Traditional Medicine practice and textbooks, what healers practiced and noted in textbooks were similar, however, there were some differences as the healers did not check for blood pressure in their practice but they checked for palms and ankles to take the temperature, and directly pressed a pain spot on the palm to examine the elements of Chaoreun and fertilization and saw the weakness of health.

This research can prove that the results of this research can contribute to the development of physical checking and diagnosis in Thai Traditional Medicine.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Author thanks Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University for financial support and lecturers of College of Allied Health Sciences for kind assistance throughout this research.

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