

## Response to ABC Radio interview with Alan Levinovitz

Friday, 22 November 2013

### ATMS' response to the interview with Alan Levinovitz on ABC Radio's Counterpoint program, Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November

**Prepared by Bill Pearson on behalf of the Australian Traditional Medicine Society**

To create a parallel between the USA Senate decision to declare Naturopathic Medicine Week and Mao Zedong's belief or otherwise in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is to undeniably draw a long bow. Indeed if the comparison is accurate we could use many an example of Mao's erratic beliefs and make up a correlation between them and a multitude of woes we are experiencing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

There are also examples in the book, "The Private Life of Chairman Mao" by Dr Li Zhisui where Mao and his medical team advocated the use of Chinese medicine when western medicine had failed to cure the great Helmsman. Indeed when drugs had failed to cure his common cold Mao was heard to say "*You don't want me to take more of your Western Medicine?*" On another occasion, prior to a trip to Russia, Mao's Doctor had to ensure that they had enough Chinese herbs in case the great leader became ill.

It is cheap criticism to look at one aspect of TCM as Levinovitz has looked at the 5 Element Theory and not taken the time to fully understand how this one element of TCM can certainly assist patients in primary health care in this 21<sup>st</sup> century.

For example: if the earth element isn't nurtured there is a real possibility that a patient won't feel supported, won't have the confidence to develop new ideas and may not allow themselves to extend in a particular area in which they wish to. If the metal element isn't devolved the patient may not have the ability to create the connections nor the stability they wish to create in so many fields of endeavour.

As a practitioner of TCM for nearly 30 years I see this weekly in my clinic, I use these simple and effective TCM techniques to assist people to change, to get well.

Why Levinovitz in his interview with Amanda Vanstone would want to use the text as mentioned above as well as some other disaffected propagandists is beyond me.

Both of them would have learned more had they attended the recent World Federation of Acupuncturists and sat with the medical practitioner (western) from Tuscany who shared the story of the Italian Government introducing acupuncture into the hospital and the vast improvement in patient outcome. Or had they attended the lectures by Australian Professor Allan Bensoussan and John McDonald on the research and outcomes within TCM in Australia.

**Does TCM work for everyone and cure all ills? Certainly not. Does western medicine? Certainly not.**

**Should we be integrating our ideas and knowledge to create a better medical mould for Australia? Certainly.**

It's a sad fact to know that many western nations are paying more to provide a sub-standard medical service than some nations spend to provide an excellent service. In Australia our health service rates 32 in the world. Other countries ahead of us you may shake your head to think of how they attained this.

Well they didn't do it by quoting from a book published in 1994 and blindly criticising a medical regime which has been around for centuries. Read up on the history of western medicine (one example is the barber surgeons) and there is also evidence of errors and vast change.

I urge readers and viewers not to look at one side of an argument. Look at integration. Look at the medicine of our forebears, at the medicine of Aboriginal Australia, of the cultures that make up our nation. Then and only then, can a fair and inspirational picture be painted.

**About Bill Pearson:**

Bill Pearson holds a Diploma in Traditional Chinese Medicine (Dip. TCM) and is a Life Member of the Australian Traditional Medicine Society.

**Links:**

[ABC Radio interview](#) on the Counterpoint program and hosted by Amanda Vanstone.

[Original article](#) written by Alan Levinovitz.