

Annual Conference for Integrative Medicine Your Role in I.M.



On Saturday, February 2, 2013, an all-day conference took place at UCLA to highlight future trends and career paths in integrative medicine. Incorporating traditional healing techniques from the East with Western medicine, integrative medicine will help transform health care. Studies show that over 40% of Americans are now using some form of alternative and complementary therapies to meet their health needs.¹

Over 200 undergraduates, students and practitioners in all areas of healthcare, and the general public arrived to attend this event, which featured lectures, panel discussions and demonstrations by experienced practitioners and researchers. An attendee described it as “very well organized. A great mix of events - panels, speakers, and interactive,” and a “great combination of didactic and experiential.”



The conference was opened by the keynoter, John Weeks, renowned publisher-editor of *The Integrator Blog*. He provided a historical overview of the origins of Integrative Medicine (IM), the status of IM today, and the direction in which IM is moving. His presentation put “where we are in perspective,” and “set this all in the context of the Affordable Care Act to further help us find a fit and name for our efforts,” one attendee commented.



Two panels showcased the work of current professionals in Integrative Medicine, how and why they entered a career promoting integrated healthcare, and advice for future leaders. The morning panel, “Clinical Applications in Integrative Medicine: Challenges and Opportunities” featured Drs. Edward Hui and Lawrence Taw from the UCLA Center for East-West Medicine and Dr. Myles Spar from Venice Family Clinic.

After sharing their personal professional paths, each of the panelist explained applications of Integrative Medicine and their views on how to bring about preventative, person-centered, and cost-effective care to patients. A commonly shared view among the panelists is how primary care needs to be reformed and to become more team-based.



The afternoon panel, “Research and Healthcare Policy: Driving IM

¹ National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) The Use of Complementary and Alternative Medicine in the United States Bethesda, MD: National Institutes of Health; December 2008. Available at: http://nccam.nih.gov/news/camstats/2007/camsurvey_fs1.htm Accessed February 8, 2013.

Forward” featuring Dr. Ryan Abbott, from Southwestern Law School, Dr. Michael Goldstein, from the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health, and Dr. Sonya Pritzker, from the UCLA Center for East-West Medicine introduced the unique ways each became interested in IM research. They urge researchers to shift from reductionist biomedical approaches to systemic, value-based methods as better means to evaluate the efficacy of whole-person and multiple-approach treatments. They also pointed out the need to realign incentives toward preventative rather than acute care, and the need for experts with diverse backgrounds in research and education.



A dynamic panel of professionals from UCLArts and Healing with expertise ranging from poetry, art, dance/movement, drama, to music therapies led experiential activities that got attendees off their seats. Each therapist demonstrated how one can achieve healing through self-expression in different ways. Their passion for the respective fields was evident. Attendees called this session “lively, engaging, and enlightening. “It was fun to watch people dance,” one said.

During the “Meet the Faculty Luncheon” students mingled with potential mentors while enjoying healthy, organic food catered by a restaurant whose Chief Chef was formally educated in Nutritional Sciences. The afternoon experiential workshop on “Self Care through Acupressure” was conducted by Huntington Memorial Hospital’s Dr. Suzie Kline. She demonstrated acupressure skills for daily wellness maintenance. This proved to be the favorite session for many, as “it was a small training [we] could take home with [us].” Throughout the day, a key message emerged: we can take responsibility for our own health simply through behaviors and lifestyle choices.



Dr. Ka-Kit Hui’s closing remarks, “IM: It Begins with You” drove home the importance of nurturing our health and relationships. He further stressed that students as future leaders can help bring about further success of IM. A new generation of change agents is needed, not just from the health professions but from all disciplines including anthropology, sociology, research, business, law, and public health. “A taskforce of all different skills and unique talents can change the healthcare system,” he said.



As the audience filed out of the auditorium, energized by new ideas and inspired to learn more, the organizers of [NCAM](#) (Nutrition, Complementary, and Alternative Medicine) celebrated a successful collaboration with the UCLA Center for East-West Medicine and the David Geffen [IMSIG](#) (Integrative Medicine Student Interest Group). This partnership promises to bring about more educational programs down the road. This event was made possible by the Shirley Hui Memorial Fund, the Gerald Oppenheimer Family Foundation, and the Annenberg Foundation.

Additional post-Conference materials will be posted on the [ExploreIM](http://www.exploreim.ucla.edu) <www.exploreim.ucla.edu>.

**To make a contribution to the Shirley Hui Memorial Fund,
please contact the UCLA Center for East-West Medicine at:
(310)794-0712 or cwem@mednet.ucla.edu**