Living Well with Tai Chi and Qigong

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Presentation Outline

• Provide an introduction to tai chi as it relates to mind-body medicine
• Brief review of tai chi research
• Review role of breath in tai chi and mind-body approaches in general
• Teach two qigong exercises (thymus tap, kidney rub)
• Provide resource list for future exploration of tai chi
• nccam.nih.gov
• 1-888-644-6226
• Outstanding resource
• Currently sponsored clinical trials include the areas of acupuncture, herbs, dietary supplements, and massage in the areas of arthritis, neurological disorders, cardiovascular disease, and cancer
Categories of Use- NIH NCCAM

1. **Alternative Systems**: TCM, Ayurvedic, Homeopathy
2. **Biological**: Diet, vitamins, supplements, herbs
3. **Manipulative/Body based**: Chiropractic, massage, Trager...
4. **Energy**: Healing Touch, Therapeutic Touch...
5. **Mind-Body**: Psychoneuroimmunology, Breath work, Guided imagery, meditation, tai chi, yoga, humor, ....
Psychoneuroimmunology

- PNI is the study of the relationships between psychological states, lifestyle choices, and the nervous, endocrine, and immune systems.
What is “Stress”? 

- Overused, non-specific 
- Typically viewed as negative 
- Promotes adaptation, growth, learning
PERCEPTION

• Negative Affect or Loss of Personal Control.
PERCEPTION

- Positive Affect;
  Sense of Personal Control
PNI

Science of mind-body medicine
Tai Chi

- Tool for shifting stress perception to improve health and well-being

- Tai chi is an ancient martial arts practice that came to the west as a moving meditation practice
Traditional Chinese Medicine

- Ancient eastern system of medicine focusing on balance, energy flow
- Meridians
- Ying/Yang
- 5 elements: fire, water, air, wood, earth
- Diet, Acupuncture, Chinese herbs, Qi Gong (tai chi)
Tai Chi Research

- More than 500 studies on the health effects of tai chi and qigong
- Decreases responses to stress; Improves heart, lung and immune function; improves blood pressure and blood sugar; decreases falls; increases strength, flexibility, and balance; decreases pain, decreases anxiety; improves lipids; helps with sleep, memory, and mood.
Qigong Research

• Increase antioxidant activity in the body
• Decreases blood pressure; increases positive mood; decreases stress; improves Parkinson’s symptoms; decreases tinnitus; improved balance and coordination; decreases neck pain and disability.
• Limited studies and mixed results in diabetes management and palliative care
Tai Chi and Cancer

• No primary prevention studies
• Pilot study (2012): Improved neuropsychological (memory, decision making, language, attention), psychological function and balance in female cancer survivors
• Improved health related quality of life in breast cancer survivors
Tai Chi and Cancer Survivorship

• Pilot Study (2011)

• Improved insulin levels and cytokine function in breast cancer survivors
Qigong and Cancer

- External form of qigong (done by practitioner on patient/client) has been shown to promote cancer cell death (apoptosis) and repress cancer cell growth and metastasis in small cell lung cancer cells.
Qigong Exercises

• Begin with focus on the breath

• Thymus Tap

• Kidney Rub
In Summary

- Tai chi is a moving meditation; a form of mind-body medicine
- The research indicates it may be helpful in managing a variety of symptoms and conditions including cancer
- Begun your practice with 2 movements
- Resource list for further exploration
Questions? Comments?