

# Research on the Development Mode of “TCM+” Urban Health Care Service Based on the Data of W City

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**Abstract:** As the development of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) health care services expands in urban areas, the health care needs of urban residents have become increasingly prominent. To ensure targeted and well-planned development of TCM health care service institutions and to establish a development model that caters to the needs of urban residents, this study conducted a questionnaire survey and interview research on the health care demands of urban residents and the distribution of TCM health care service institutions in W City. The results revealed misconceptions in the urban residents' understanding of TCM cultural knowledge, a lack of rationality in the layout of urban TCM health care service institutions, a lack of regulatory mechanisms in grassroots TCM health care institutions, and a requirement to raise industry entry barriers. In response to these findings, this study proposed corresponding countermeasures and suggestions in terms of demand, promotion, and management.

**Keywords:** Traditional Chinese Medicine; Health Care Services; Urban Residents; Development Model; Countermeasures and Suggestions

## 1. Introduction

Back in 2016, Li Tianqi, the Executive Vice President of the National Health Industry Enterprise Management Association, proposed that “only by forming a health industry ecosystem with health as its core, can the development of the health industry be meaningful”. With increasing consumer demand, favorable policy guidance, and substantial investment, the ecosystem of the health industry is gradually taking shape and

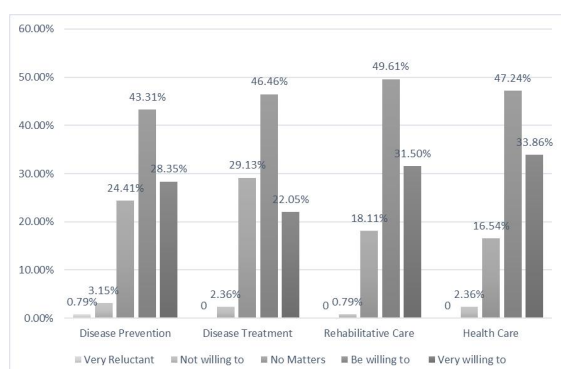
improving [1-3]. Subsequent policies have emphasized the importance of giving equal weight to both Chinese and Western medicine, vigorously developing the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) industry, and simultaneously constructing a coordinated home and community-based care system that integrates medical care and health maintenance [4-6], while also enhancing comprehensive regulatory systems for elderly care services [7-9]. The development of health care services has provided many conveniences to people's lives, gradually becoming a part of the demands within urban communities where most people reside [10, 11]. Encouraged by policies that promote the integration of medical care and elderly care, incorporating TCM into the health care industry not only further harnesses the potential of TCM, but also provides gentle and effective therapeutic and healthcare solutions for urban health care seekers.

## 2. Questionnaire Survey and the Analysis of the Result

In order to gain a better understanding of the demand and supply of TCM health care services among urban residents, the researcher conducted a market survey focusing on W City. To ensure the validity and authenticity of the data, this survey employed a random sampling method. A total of 140 questionnaires were distributed, with 130 returned and 127 of them being deemed valid, resulting in an effective rate of 90.7%. The survey was conducted from two perspectives: first, the demand for TCM health care services among urban residents, and second, the distribution of TCM health care service institutions within the city.

### 2.1 Urban Residents' Demand for TCM Health Care Services

From the survey data (Figure. 1), it can be observed that among the respondents, 71.66% expressed willingness to receive TCM treatment for disease prevention, 68.05% for disease treatment, 81.11% for rehabilitation and health preservation, and 81.10% for elderly care and health care. This indicates that there is a more significant demand and recognition for TCM in the areas of rehabilitation, health preservation, and elderly care. However, the acceptance rate for TCM treatment in disease management is relatively weaker. Furthermore, Fig. 1 also reveals that the proportions of respondents who are less willing to accept TCM services for disease prevention, disease treatment, rehabilitation and health preservation, and elderly care and health care are 3.94%, 2.36%, 0.79%, and 2.36% respectively. This suggests that there is a lower acceptance of TCM services in disease prevention, which is inconsistent with the cultural concept of TCM emphasizing “preventive medicine, adapting treatments during illnesses, and preventing relapses after recovery”. The underlying reasons behind this inconsistency warrant further investigation. In summary, the demand for TCM health care services among urban residents exhibits the following three distinctive characteristics: Firstly, the overall demand is relatively high; secondly, compared to other aspects, there is a relatively lower demand for TCM interventions in disease treatment; and thirdly, compared to other aspects, the acceptance of



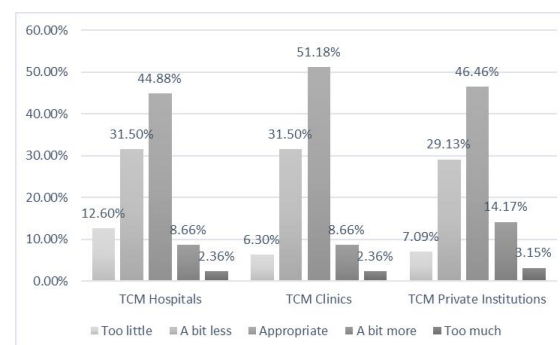
TCM services for disease prevention is relatively lower.

**Figure 1. Survey on Residents' willingness to Choose TCM Services**

## 2.2 The Layout of TCM Health Care Service Institutions in Cities

This survey focused on gathering urban

residents' opinions regarding the layout of large-scale TCM hospitals, small-scale TCM clinics with medical qualifications, and general private institutions. Private institutions mainly include moxibustion clinics, massage parlors, and TCM health care centers. The radius of daily living activities was defined as within a half-hour travel distance. From the survey data (Figure. 2), it can be observed that overall, people in the city are relatively satisfied with the layout of TCM health care service institutions. However, regarding the layout of TCM hospitals, TCM clinics, and private institutions, 44.1%, 37.8%, and 36.22% of respondents respectively expressed dissatisfaction, indicating that urban residents believe there is still room for improvement in the layout of TCM hospitals. In addition, during the survey interviews, opinions regarding the layout of private institutions varied. Some residents believed that there are already numerous private institutions, but their qualifications and regulation are inconsistent. On the other hand, some residents believed that the layout of private institutions contributes to the dissemination of the TCM philosophy of disease prevention and treatment, as well as satisfying the daily health care needs and preventive healthcare demands of urban residents.



**Figure 2. Survey on Residents' satisfaction with the Layout of TCM Medical Institutions**

## 3. Problems Analysis

Based on market research, urban residents have distinct characteristics in terms of their demand for TCM health care institutions and the issues they encounter. These factors have significant implications for the future development of urban TCM health care.

### 3.1 Demand Analysis

On one hand, there is insufficient understanding of TCM. Urban residents have a relatively high demand for TCM services, whether it's for daily health maintenance, disease prevention, disease treatment, or post-illness recovery. They recognize the value of TCM services and have a desire for them. However, their knowledge about TCM is limited to a superficial level, lacking a deeper understanding of its principles and mechanisms. As a result, in the process of seeking medical treatment, some residents may have biased judgments regarding the severity of their illnesses. Consequently, they may choose to visit ordinary moxibustion clinics without proper medical qualifications, leading to delayed diagnosis and treatment of more serious conditions.

On the other hand, there is a distorted understanding of TCM. Urban residents have access to various sources of TCM knowledge in their daily lives. However, due to selective excerpts and misinterpretations by certain media outlets, TCM knowledge has been distorted and misconstrued in its dissemination. As a result, residents are exposed to extreme and erroneous information about TCM. During interviews, many residents expressed similar concerns, pointing out that some media outlets and TCM institutions lack rigor in disseminating TCM knowledge and culture, which negatively impacts people's perception and acceptance of TCM knowledge and principles.

### 3.2 Supply Analysis

On one hand, there is a lack of clear positioning and planning in TCM service institutions. When it comes to the layout of TCM service institutions, the distribution of TCM hospitals and clinics is relatively reasonable, considering the required qualifications. Ranging from community-based TCM clinics to regional TCM hospitals, they can generally meet the needs of urban residents. However, there is a lack of planning in the layout of private institutions such as moxibustion clinics and massage parlors. Many community setups suffer from overcrowding or excessive dispersion, resulting in a competition for limited market space and leaving fewer options for residents in terms of convenient lifestyle services.

On the other hand, there is a need for strict control over the qualifications of TCM service institutions. In community-based TCM service institutions, especially private institutions, there are issues related to unclear qualifications and instances of fundraising and then disappearing. In recent years, due to various socio-economic factors, many private institutions have faced problems such as poor management, unfavorable locations, and low customer flow. This has resulted in insufficient funding, ultimately forcing them to exit the market while compromising the genuine interests of residents.

### 3.3 Management Analysis

The provision of TCM services to urban residents necessitates long-term and continuous market regulation, given the sizable market involved. From the establishment and operation of institutions to the quality control of TCM services, it requires collaborative regulatory efforts from multiple departments. The unique nature of TCM services allows it to transcend ordinary market activities and venture into the realm of professional healthcare. This also exposes the TCM service industry to greater risks and potential threats to the lives of residents. Therefore, sustained, stringent, and grassroots-level regulation is indispensable.

## 4. Countermeasure and Suggestion

### 4.1 Strengthening Supervision and Management of the Media Promoting TCM Culture

TCM culture, as an integral part of China's traditional culture, requires strict supervision of cultural promotion through the media. Currently, the market is filled with diverse forms of media and a wide range of promotional content. While this provides more platforms for cultural promotion, it also leads to issues of misrepresentation and misinformation. Therefore, the departments responsible for TCM cultural promotion, alongside other educational and promotional departments, should work together to manage existing accounts, articles, videos, and other media relating to the promotion of TCM culture. They should delete or categorize content that is misleading or inaccurate. For unpublished articles, strict content review

should be conducted prior to publication. In addition, there should be a rigorous approval mechanism and real-name authentication for registering TCM cultural promotion accounts and platforms. It is crucial to collect relevant information in advance for future regulatory purposes.

Moreover, there should be corresponding laws, regulations, and market supervision rules for the promotion of TCM culture. Punitive measures should be in place for malicious misinterpretation, cherry-picking, and exaggerated propaganda, aiming to establish clear industry boundaries, purify the industry environment, and eradicate market behaviors that maliciously defame TCM culture.

Furthermore, it is important for governmental departments to collaborate with TCM institutions, colleges, and research organizations to establish TCM-related exhibition halls and museums. Examples include exhibitions on Chinese medicinal herbs, museums showcasing TCM culture, and museums dedicated to ethnic medicine. These initiatives will provide urban residents with channels to understand and learn about traditional TCM culture.

#### **4.2 Reasonable Distribution of TCM Health Care Service Institutions**

The distribution of TCM health care service institutions should be classified and positioned based on the residents' needs and the characteristics of TCM services. The concept of TCM healthcare emphasizes the principles of "prevention before illness, prevention of progression during illness, and prevention of relapse after recovery". Therefore, the layout of TCM health care services for urban residents can also be organized around these three aspects. For the majority of individuals focused on "prevention before illness", it is encouraged to establish community-based primary healthcare units within official TCM service institutions, as well as encourage the establishment of complementary private institutions. However, the qualifications of these institutions should be carefully examined and followed up with ongoing supervision. For individuals concerned with "prevention of progression during illness", proper guidance should be provided to encourage patients to seek comprehensive treatment at TCM hospitals and clinics, under the guidance of

qualified TCM physicians. For individuals in the stage of "prevention of relapse after recovery", there is a need for relatively formal and specialized medical personnel and TCM nurses to provide follow-up rehabilitation and maintenance. This requires coordinated collaboration between official institutions and private organizations to truly serve the urban residents and their healthcare needs.

#### **4.3 Setting up a Task Force to Oversee the TCM Service Market**

Due to the unique nature of the TCM industry and its wide-ranging scope, the regulation of TCM service institutions requires stricter and sustained measures. The TCM regulatory authorities can collaborate with market supervision departments to form a specialized task force. This task force will conduct periodic supervision and management of scattered TCM service institutions in communities. It will also conduct random inspections on herbal medicines and medical qualifications. Regular training sessions, both online and offline, should be provided to health care practitioners, ensuring continuous professional development and the enhancement of professional ethics.

#### **5. Conclusion**

Through research, it has been found that there are misconceptions among urban residents regarding TCM cultural knowledge. The layout of TCM health care service institutions in urban areas lacks rationality, and further strengthening of the regulation of grassroots TCM healthcare institutions is needed. The entry barriers for the industry also need to be raised. The promotion of TCM knowledge and culture should be guided by authenticity and strict management. The layout of urban TCM healthcare institutions needs to be planned and adjusted, and strict supervision mechanisms should be established for grassroots TCM healthcare institutions in urban areas, so that the development of the holistic health industry raises awareness of the importance of well-being among an increasing number of individuals. As an important part of the population, urban residents also have a demand for health care services. With the support of TCM culture and medical services, urban health care services can be further enhanced, while strict industry regulation

safeguards its development. By providing residents with better and higher-quality services, it can also contribute to the prosperity and growth of the healthcare industry.

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