

Value Positioning and Practical Path of Integrating Traditional Chinese Medicine with Modern Medicine from the Perspective of Healthy China

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Abstract:

Through methods such as literature review and logical analysis, this study systematically examines the concept and significance of sports-medicine integration, explores its value positioning in China's development, and proposes diversified implementation pathways. Key findings: Supporting policy implementation to enhance public health systems; alleviating healthcare pressures to optimize patient-oriented medical services; promoting deep integration with tailored guidance for diverse populations; preserving traditional Chinese medicine heritage while driving innovative integration. Proposed solutions include: accelerating content innovation in sports-medicine integration; establishing an information dissemination platform; setting up a sports prescription research center; and strengthening talent cultivation systems. These measures aim to provide theoretical insights for high-quality development of sports-medicine integration in China.

Keywords:

Integration of Sports And Medicine, Healthy China, High-quality Development

1. Introduction

The new era is a crucial stage for promoting high-quality development in the health sector. During this period, it is essential to align with the policy guidance of Healthy China, prioritize the development of the sports-medical integration strategy, and strengthen non-medical health interventions. Meanwhile, the Outline of the 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China and Long-Range Objectives Through 2035 explicitly states the commitment to a prevention-first approach, the deep implementation of Healthy China initiatives, and the improvement of national health promotion policies [1], further establishing the significant value of sports-medical integration in the construction of Healthy China during this new era. Facing current challenges such as weak national physical fitness, insufficient prevention awareness, and the lack of implementation of healthy lifestyles, research on sports-medical integration has become an urgent issue to

address. Therefore, studies on the value positioning and practical pathways of sports-medical integration provide theoretical foundations for its development.

2. Concept and Significance of Integration of Sports and Medicine

2.1. Concept of Integration of Sports and Medicine

The integration of sports and medicine has developed diverse conceptual frameworks based on practical foundations, adopting a comprehensive perspective. Yu Qing [2] proposed that this integration refers to the mutual penetration and interconnected development of sports and medicine as two major disciplines, forming a new paradigm characterized by cross-disciplinary collaboration and mutual reinforcement. Its essence lies in exploring pathways to enhance health through physical activity, with the ultimate goal of addressing national health challenges in China. From a medicine-dominated perspective, Xiang Yuhong [3] defined sports-medicine integration as a health service model that utilizes sports-based interventions to promote physical well-being, applies rehabilitation techniques to common disease treatment, and incorporates exercise elements into medical practice. From a sports-dominated perspective, Li Jingyuan [4] emphasized that this integration effectively combines sports resources with medical resources, improving public health levels through sports activity interventions and the supervision/evaluation of medical technologies.

In summary, based on conceptual analysis by relevant scholars, the integration of sports and medicine is guided by national policies, with the primary objective of implementing interdisciplinary systems in the fields of sports and medicine. It is applied in clinical settings for disease prevention and medical diagnosis and treatment. Its distinctive feature lies in emphasizing the preventive philosophy of “treating diseases before they occur,” providing precise services throughout the entire health cycle of the population.

2.2. Significance of Integrating Sports and Medicine

The integration of sports and medicine, from its conceptual proposal to a series of research and practical implementations, has become an effective catalyst for the orderly development of healthcare initiatives. It serves the entire health cycle of the population through the sports + healthcare approach.

The current social phenomenon of “difficulty in accessing medical care and treatment” continues to undermine the sustainable development of healthcare systems. The prevalence of chronic diseases, coupled with weakened physical conditions among children and adolescents, and recurrent health issues in the elderly, underscores the practical significance of integrating sports and medicine. Conceptually, this integration actively promotes public awareness of proactive health management by applying Traditional Chinese Medicine’s “preventive treatment” philosophy in practice, enabling citizens to spontaneously prevent diseases through physical exercise. Practically, it guides individuals toward scientifically effective workouts based on the principle that “exercise is a powerful healer.” Accurate considerations regarding exercise intensity control, duration sustainability, and activity selection are implemented to avoid indiscriminate exercise practices [5]. Popular martial arts, as traditional Chinese sports rich in cultural heritage and long favored by the public, have become key components of modern national fitness programs, exemplified by Tai Chi and Xingyi Quan. In terms of content, the

integration of sports and medicine leverages unique advantages by applying these principles to daily life and medical rehabilitation stages. Hospitals, schools, and professional associations serve as primary platforms for advocating healthy lifestyles, establishing scientific models integrating medical care, physical training, wellness maintenance, and nutritional support. This includes developing exercise prescription databases, building comprehensive training bases for interdisciplinary professionals, and creating non-medical health service centers tailored to diverse populations.

3. Value Positioning of Integrative Medicine Integration from the Perspective of China Health Vision

3.1. Facilitating Policy Implementation and Improving the Public Health System

The proposal of sports-medical integration has significantly strengthened the relationship between the sports and medical fields, enabling these two previously independent systems to achieve a strong alliance through policy guidance. From the introduction of the first “National Fitness Program Outline” to the gradual implementation of the “Healthy China Planning Outline,” and finally to the realization of the Healthy China strategic goals, sports-medical integration has proven to be an effective measure in accelerating the attainment of this ideal.

Public health is a public service related to the health of the general population in a country or region. It includes the prevention, surveillance, and treatment of major diseases; the supervision and regulation of food and drug environments; as well as health promotion and health education. In the new era, the integration of sports and medicine plays a significant role in improving the public health system by contributing to disease prevention, surveillance, and treatment, and implementing corresponding measures at different stages of disease management and across various regions. For instance, Shanghai and Jiangsu have launched national physical fitness testing, early screening for adolescent scoliosis, and subsequent monitoring and treatment, fully demonstrating their goal of advancing health interventions earlier [6]. In health promotion efforts, primary and secondary schools, social health associations, and community health service stations serve as key platforms to comprehensively implement the policies and guidelines of Healthy China, fostering public health awareness and gradually shaping a new paradigm for China’s public health system.

Therefore, the integration of sports and medicine can not only accurately implement the policy directives of “Healthy China”, but also continuously improve the public health system in the new era and ensure national health security issues.

3.2. Alleviating Medical Pressure and Optimizing People-Oriented Medical Services

With continuous social development, China’s population health is facing severe crises and challenges, significantly increasing the burden on the national healthcare system. Currently, the mortality rate of chronic diseases reaches as high as 85% [7], with the primary causes being lack of physical activity and irregular lifestyle habits. The first China Health Management Blue Book released in 2018 pointed out that the number of chronic disease cases in China has reached approximately 300 million, with the overall situation characterized by a large number of patients, prolonged disease duration, high medical costs, and significant service demand[7]. At the “6th China Chronic Disease Health Management and Big Health Industry Summit & 7th China·Xiangya Cardiovascular Health Management Forum” held in Changsha on

June 8, 2022, it was learned that chronic diseases account for 88.5% of total deaths in China, which is 3.5 percentage points higher than the 85% reported in the first China Health Management Blue Book in 2018. These data further indicate that chronic diseases have become a major risk factor for declining health levels in China, resulting in increasingly severe disease and economic burdens, thereby placing immense pressure on the country's healthcare system.

The concept of sports-integrated medicine can optimize the burden on China's healthcare system by promoting physical exercise through sports activities, thereby enhancing immune resistance, achieving healthy physical and mental states, and improving overall physical fitness. From a healthcare perspective, this integration leverages its inherent advantages to implement preventive exercises tailored to patients' conditions, shifting the focus from disease treatment to prevention. In terms of public sports, it further advances nationwide fitness initiatives, encouraging active health maintenance and exercise participation among the general population. This fosters a health paradigm where "exercise is a powerful healer," ultimately reducing medical expenditures.

The integration of medicine and sports is guided by the concept of prevention-oriented healthcare, which enhances public awareness of health, effectively prevents the onset of chronic diseases, thereby alleviating the pressure on China's healthcare system and addressing the current challenges of "difficulty in accessing medical services and treatment" faced by the population.

3.3. Promote deep integration and emphasize guidance for diverse populations

"Prevention" is the most effective and economical way to improve national health. It demonstrates the significant role of integrating sports and medicine in health China and nationwide fitness. Therefore, it is essential to strengthen the deep integration between sports and medicine in the new era, advancing the deep integration of public health and nationwide fitness in tandem, with a focus on providing health guidance for different populations (collective groups).

The integration of sports and medicine is key to achieving a healthy body, healthy environment, healthy economy, healthy society, and ultimately realizing a healthy China. In this regard, the deep integration of "sports and medicine" is an inevitable path for further development, based on the integration model of "three integrations + four collaborations" (three integrations: technology integration, resource integration, and discourse power integration; four collaborations: national-level sports-medicine integration centers, tertiary hospitals, community hospitals, and local sports bureaus) [8]. First, in addition to the integration of technology, resources, and discourse power within the three integrations, it is also necessary to strengthen systemic integration, breaking down boundaries and achieving seamless connectivity from the core of the system. Second, beyond the hierarchical distribution of the four collaborations—national-level entities, tertiary hospitals, community hospitals, and local sports bureaus—by incorporating community health associations, this hierarchical structure from national to community health associations can more comprehensively and deeply serve the broader population. Finally, implementing the deep integration model of "four integrations and five collaborations" allows for top-level design addressing national public health issues and specialized health guidance tailored to different populations. This model not only ensures the smooth implementation of

sports-medicine integration policies but also enables precise and effective responses to diseases.

3.4. Continuation of Traditional Chinese Medicine Meridian System and Promotion of Integration Innovation between Physical Therapy and Medicine

The “Healthy China 2030” Plan Outline (hereinafter referred to as the Outline) proposes to “fully leverage the unique advantages of traditional Chinese medicine, effectively develop TCM health preservation and preventive care services, and actively promote the inheritance and innovation of traditional Chinese medicine” [9]. The integration of sports and medicine not only combines with the diagnosis and treatment of Western medicine but also requires the inheritance, promotion, and deep integration of TCM content.

Firstly, the concept of “preventive treatment” in sports-medicine integration draws inspiration from the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) health philosophy expressed in *Suwen: Great Treatise on Regulating the Four Seasons and Nourishing the Spirit*: “Therefore, the sage does not treat existing diseases but prevents them.” This principle is rationally applied to address national healthcare issues. Secondly, TCM wellness techniques (such as Baduanjin) have been effectively incorporated into public health practices. For instance, long-term Baduanjin exercises can regulate blood glucose, lipid levels, and cardiopulmonary endurance, thereby improving blood pressure control—a crucial approach for middle-aged and elderly individuals managing hypertension. Lastly, innovative developments in TCM, as proposed by Duan Dejian [10], advocate for an integrated rehabilitation model combining martial arts, TCM, and Western medicine. This “martial-TCM integration” framework alleviates burdens and reduces stress in China’s public health system while maximizing TCM’s unique advantages in disease prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation. Through historical integration of traditional martial arts and TCM, sports-medicine integration has evolved into a distinctive “martial-TCM fusion” model characterized by traditional martial arts as primary physical exercise and TCM as diagnostic and therapeutic tools. This approach has crystallized holistic health perspectives, comprehensive prevention and treatment protocols, and interdisciplinary talent development strategies.

Through the inheritance and innovation of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), a new form of integration between sports and medicine has gradually taken shape. On one hand, this integration actively promotes the inheritance and innovative development of TCM; on the other hand, it combines historical experience with current circumstances to pioneer a new model of high-quality development in sports-medicine integration.

4. Practical Pathways of Integrating Traditional Chinese Medicine and Modern Medicine from the Perspective of China Health Vision

4.1. Integrated Development: Leveraging the Experience of Integrating Traditional Chinese Medicine and Martial Arts to Promote Content Innovation in Sports-Medicine Integration

The integration of sports and medicine should enhance content innovation through diversified approaches to enrich its substance and practical diversity. First, it is

essential to break through developmental bottlenecks by transcending conventional perceptions of sports-medicine integration and drawing inspiration from traditional sports disciplines. For instance, combining traditional martial arts with Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) could create “martial-medicine integration” models applicable to public health services. Second, leveraging successful collaborations between martial arts and TCM can expand the scope of sports-medicine integration, addressing public fitness needs and fostering localized models with distinctive cultural characteristics. Finally, the integration framework should be categorized into three systems: (1) Physical assessment systems utilizing advanced Western medical technologies for comprehensive health evaluations; (2) Modern sports-medicine systems combining contemporary sports programs with evidence-based medical interventions; (3) Traditional sports-TCM systems integrating martial arts techniques with TCM modalities such as massage therapy, acupuncture, and bone-setting practices.

4.2. Communication and Promotion: Establishing an Integrated Sports-Medicine Promotion Platform by Drawing on Exemplary Case Models

First, focus on disseminating content that the public needs from a theoretical perspective. The first approach involves instilling concepts to help people establish the health belief that “exercise is a good doctor,” encouraging them to voluntarily adopt sports as a means of preventing chronic diseases. The second approach involves promoting healthy exercise, such as the China Fitness Qigong Association sending out scientific, safe, and practical fitness qigong theories and methods daily. Next, leverage new media platforms to promote the value of integrating sports and medicine, combining physical activities with medical prevention into a modular dissemination model. Live broadcasts can be used to invite industry bloggers and experts for explanations, such as Liu Genghong’s fitness routines, creating an online platform for sports and health. Finally, establish community sports-medicine integration service stations. The goal is to improve public health levels and popularize health knowledge. These stations regularly host health forums, where community health service centers and neighborhood committees collaborate to select experts in relevant fields to conduct “Public + Comprehensive Health” lectures for residents, providing health education and knowledge dissemination. Community sports-medicine integration service stations deeply engage with residents’ lives, offering convenience to every community member and ensuring timely and precise communication. They serve as an information service platform that combines theory with practice.

4.3. Sports-Medicine Demonstration: Establishing a Sports Prescription Research Center in Line with the Characteristics of Sports-Medicine Integration

Establish a sports prescription research center integrating sports and medicine to develop tactical strategies for combating diseases using sports prescriptions as a method. First, research should be conducted targeting different populations, disease conditions, and forms of exercise, including all age groups; disease conditions encompass various states such as health status; and forms of exercise include modern sports and traditional ethnic sports, among others, to advance the study of sports prescriptions integrating sports and medicine. Second, a database of exercise movement groups confirmed through medical (traditional Chinese medicine) methods should be utilized, combined with different symptoms and populations to generate targeted sports prescriptions, such as fitness exercise prescriptions, competitive sports

prescriptions, and rehabilitation guidance exercise prescriptions, each including prescriptions tailored to different populations, muscle groups, and symptoms. Finally, an independent sports prescription research center should be established, which can be affiliated with secondary-level hospitals or above, the National Health Research Institute of the General Administration of Sport of China, or various sports and medical universities, enabling the research on sports prescriptions to be promptly applied in the construction of a healthy China.

4.4. Talent Reserve and Allocation: Clarifying Key Aspects of Talent Cultivation and Strengthening the Medical Talent Training System

The cultivation of interdisciplinary talents integrating sports and medicine is key to promoting their high-quality development. Appropriate practical approaches for talent training should be proposed. Firstly, sports colleges and hospitals should jointly establish sports-medicine integration disciplines to form an orderly disciplinary system for training interdisciplinary talents proficient in both sports and medicine. Secondly, the General Administration of Sport of China and the China Sports Science Society and its branches should proactively collaborate with medical departments and tertiary hospitals to regularly organize training programs for sports rehabilitation physicians. Thirdly, a qualification certification system for sports-medicine integration should be established. Existing health managers and social sports instructors should be consolidated and redefined to create a tiered and categorized vocational qualification system for sports-medicine integration. By mobilizing schools and society to form a dual training mechanism, the current shortage of sports-medicine integration personnel can be effectively addressed. This robust talent pool will better contribute to the development of Healthy China.

5. Conclusions

In the new era, the integration of sports and medicine actively responds to the call for high-quality development in the health sector, proactively shouldering the historic mission of improving national health levels and enhancing the quality of life. It further demonstrates that the integration of sports and medicine is a highly practical strategic guideline, effectively accelerating the implementation of Healthy China and meeting the diversified development needs of the national health sector. Its systematic development approach not only satisfies the current public demand for healthy lifestyles but also significantly promotes the popularization and dissemination of nationwide fitness initiatives.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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