

Healing methods conflict in China

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Traditional practitioners are butting heads with Western medicine believers in China as the country balances traditional remedies against modern healing.

A professor at a regional university last year began an online petition that seeks to remove traditional medicine's protected status from the Chinese constitution, The Los Angeles Times said Monday. Critics said traditional techniques are dangerous, relying on untested potions with built-in excuses if they don't work.

For adherents of the 3,000-year-old system, the move is near heresy. The Health Ministry labeled the petition drive as "ignorant of history."

Unlike Western medicine, which focuses on the disease, traditional medicine takes the approach that the body provides external clues to an internal imbalance that can be addressed with herbs and acupuncture.

The issue arises at a time that traditional Chinese medicine is seen abroad as an answer to the perceived sterile and uncaring nature of Western healthcare.

On a recent trip to China, U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt said the two countries planned to trade lessons on how to integrate Western and Chinese medicine.

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