

# Chinese traditional medicine must be regulated: Europe doctors

November 7 2019

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Top European medical bodies demanded Thursday that Chinese traditional medicines be subject to the same regulatory oversight as conventional Western methods, despite recent WHO recognition of their use.

"Just because the World Health Organisation includes a chapter on Traditional Chinese Medicine in its new International Classification of Diseases, it is not automatically safe to use without robust evidence," Professor Dan Marhala, President of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, said in a statement issued by top European medical and scientific bodies.

The European Academies' Science Advisory Council (EA SAC) and the Federation of European Academies of Medicine (EAM) said European lawmakers must protect the health of European citizens.

Accordingly, the existing European regulatory framework should be revised to make sure Traditional Chinese Medicine (TC) is held to the same standards of proof and evidence as [conventional medicine](#).

"There have been examples where some Traditional Chinese Medicine has undergone thorough pre-[clinical investigation](#) and proven in rigorous clinical trials to contribute significant health benefit—artemisinin therapy for malaria, for example," Marhala said.

"There may be more leads to diagnosis and therapeutic benefit yet to be

discovered but this can in no way mean that other claims can be accepted uncritically."

It was not necessarily the Who's intention to promote the use of TC, but its stamp of approval could lead supporters to promote wider application, the statement cautioned.

As a result, patients could be confused over which diagnosis was appropriate and which therapy was effective.

More serious still, said former EASAC president Jos van der Meer, is that some TCMs "can have serious side effects and interactions with other treatments."

"Moreover, patients may be at risk that severe diseases are treated ineffectively and conventional medical procedures delayed," he added.

The WHO included TCMs in an official classification of diseases coming into effect in January 2022.

In 2015, China's Tu Youyou won the Nobel Prize for [medicine](#) for discovering artemisinin, giving a huge boost to the credibility of TCM which many in the west deride as lacking scientific foundation and verging on quackery.

In China, traditional medicine has a long, distinguished history and its practitioners are treated with great respect.

EASAC comprises the national science academies of EU Member states, plus Norway and Switzerland.

FEAM groups medical academies which provide advice to the European authorities.

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Citation: Chinese traditional medicine must be regulated: Europe doctors (2019, November 7)  
retrieved 4 May 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-11-chinese-traditional-medicine-europe-doctors.html>

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