

The Value and Enlightenment of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture to the Development of Medical Ethics

Jiawei Cao¹, Huqun Wu²

¹Xi'an Jiaotong University City College, Xi'an 710018, China

²XD Group Hospital, Xi'an 710003, China

ABSTRACT

The excellent traditional Chinese culture is of great value to the development of medical ethics. The Confucian benevolence thought enhances the patient care and the doctor's sense of responsibility in medical ethics. The holistic view of Chinese medicine culture promotes the understanding of full respect for life. The traditional medical spirit in China emphasizes the moral and professional integrity in medical ethics. The historical cases of medical ethics provide rich practical materials for the teaching and research of medical ethics. In the development and practice of medical ethics, we should promote the trust and respect in the relationship between doctors and patients with the Confucian principle of benevolence, promote the application of medical ethics in individual treatment with the holistic view of traditional Chinese medicine, strengthen the ethical self-discipline of medical practitioners by carrying forward the spirit of ancient medical spirit, and learn from historical cases of medical ethics to cultivate the ethical awareness and practical ability of medical students in medical education.

KEYWORDS

Excellent traditional chinese culture; Medical ethics; Value; Enlightenment

The 2021 Ideological and Political Teaching Research Demonstration Center Project of Xi'an Jiaotong University City College: Ideological and Political Teaching Research Demonstration Center (KCSZSF0201); The 2024 School-level Scientific Research Potential Cultivation Project of Xi'an Jiaotong University City College: Research on Integrating Xi Jinping Cultural Thoughts into the Teaching of Ideological and Political Theory Courses in Colleges and Universities (2024PY11).

In the context of the rapid development of medical industry today, the importance of medical ethics has become increasingly prominent. With the advancement of medical technology and the acceleration of globalization, the ethical challenges faced by medical workers have become more complex, which not only tests the professional skills of doctors, but also involves deep-level questions of ethics and humanity. In this environment, the medical ethics thought in traditional Chinese culture provides a unique perspective and important inspiration for the deepening of modern medical ethics. The Confucian concept of benevolence, the holistic concept of traditional Chinese medicine and the rich historical cases of medical ethics are not only important parts of the cultural heritage, but also important resources to solve the problems of modern medical ethics. An in-depth study of the value and inspiration of the excellent traditional Chinese culture for the development of medical ethics is of great significance for improving the doctor-patient relationship, enhancing the quality of medical services, and building a more comprehensive and humanistic medical ethical framework. At the same time, it can contribute Chinese wisdom and solutions to the

development of global medical ethics.

1 Chinese Modern Medical Ethics

Chinese modern medical ethics is the product of the deep fusion of Chinese traditional culture and Western ethical thoughts, and has the distinct cross-cultural characteristic. Within the framework of this discipline, medicine is not limited to the scientific or technical level, but is endowed with deep ethical values, which echo the ancient Chinese Confucian idea of “benevolence”. Medical education institutions in China actively integrate these traditional medical ethics into the modern medical education system, and are committed to cultivating medical professionals with high professional ethics. The education method is deeply inspired by the traditional education concept of “moral education first”.

With the continuous development of medical ethics, China has issued and implemented many medical ethics norms, such as the “Medical Ethics Norms for Medical Personnel and the Implementation Measures”, which fully reflects the country’s great attention to medical ethics. These measures not only regulate medical behavior, but also highlight the responsibility of the medical industry in society, and reflect the ethical demand of pursuing the overall harmony and social responsibility in Chinese culture.

In practical application, Chinese modern medical ethics emphasizes several core ethical principles, such as the principle of nonmaleficence, the principle of benevolence, the principle of justice and the principle of respecting autonomy. The combination of these principles and mutual respect and humanistic care in traditional culture is more in line with China’s social and cultural background and medical practice.

The development of modern Chinese medical ethics is a cultural fusion and innovation, which draws on the scientific methods of Western ethics and is deeply influenced by Chinese traditional medical ethics and philosophical thoughts. This deep combination of Eastern and Western cultures not only gives Chinese medical ethics a unique cultural connotation and practical value, but also shows a unique perspective and far-reaching influence in the field of global medical ethics.

2 The Value of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture to the Development of Medical Ethics

The excellent traditional Chinese culture is of great value to the development of medical ethics. The Confucian benevolence thought strengthens the patient care and the sense of responsibility if doctors in medical ethics. The holistic concept of traditional Chinese medicine culture promotes the comprehensive respect for life. The traditional medical spirit emphasizes the moral conduct and professional integrity. In addition, the historical cases of medical ethics provide rich practical materials for the teaching and research of medical ethics.

2.1 The Confucian benevolence thought strengthens the patient care and the sense of responsibility of doctors in medical ethics

The Confucian benevolence thought occupies the core position in Chinese traditional culture and has far-reaching influence on modern medical ethics. Benevolence is not only an abstract moral concept, but also a specific practical guidance principle, which requires medical staff to show deep sympathy and care for patients in clinical practice. This people-oriented care mode reflects the professional ethics of doctors, but also demonstrates the respect for the value of patients’ lives.

The core of benevolence is to promote the harmony and care among individuals. Through this thought, medical ethics emphasizes that medical personnel should adopt a holistic caring attitude, paying attention to the patient's physical health as well as his mental and emotional state. In modern medical practice, this care is translated into a full range of patient care. Especially in the treatment decisions of long-term or dying patients, the spirit of benevolence encourages doctors to make more humane choice, and fully respect the dignity and willingness of patients.

In terms of ethical decisions, the Confucian benevolence thought provides an important moral guidance for medical ethics. In the allocation of medical resources, risk assessment and moral dilemmas, the principle of benevolence urges medical personnel to pay more attention to the well-being of patients when weighing medical behavior. For example, in the face of terminal patients, doctors are more inclined to choose palliative care rather than take extreme life-extending measures, which not only reflects the respect for the quality of life of patients, but also reflects the emotional care of patients and their families.

In addition, the benevolence thought also has a profound impact on the concept of doctor-patient relationship. Confucian culture attaches great importance to interpersonal harmony and believes that harmony is the key to realizing benevolence, which is particularly important in the doctor-patient relationship. Good doctor-patient relationship can not only improve the treatment effect, but also improve the mental health of patients. By emphasizing the integrity, respect and compassion, the benevolence thought promotes doctors to establish a patient-centered service mode, and advocates the two-way communication and respect each other, rather than the simple therapeutic behavior.

In the medical education and clinical practice, continuously emphasizing and practicing the Confucian benevolence thought can effectively improve the professional ethics of medical staff, optimize the medical service system, and promote the healthy and sustainable development of the medical industry.

2.2 The holistic concept of traditional Chinese medicine culture promotes the understanding of full respect for life in medical ethics

The holistic concept of traditional Chinese medicine culture has injected profound cultural connotations into modern medical ethics. It regards the human body as an organic whole, emphasizes the interaction of physical, psychological, environmental and other factors, provides a unique perspective for medical ethics, and promotes the comprehensive attention to the overall health of patients.

The holistic view of traditional Chinese medicine requires doctors to not only pay attention to the physiological symptoms, but also comprehensively consider the patients' emotions, social relations and living environment in the process of diagnosis and treatment. For example, in the treatment of chronic diseases, doctors not only need to evaluate the condition, but also need to have a deep understanding of the patient's psychological state and lifestyle habits, so as to develop a more personalized and comprehensive treatment plan. This multidimensional care approach reflects the deep respect for the value of patients' lives.

In addition, the traditional Chinese medicine culture puts prevention first and advocates taking proactive preventive measures before the onset of diseases. This forward-looking health management concept reflects the high concern for public health, helps to realize the reasonable allocation of medical resources between prevention and treatment, highlights the ethical value of preventive medicine, and contributes to improving the overall public health level.

The holistic view of traditional Chinese medicine further enriches the ethical consideration in medical decision-making when facing the medical choices of terminal patients or evaluating life-

extending technologies. It encourages medical staff to examine issues from a broader perspective, considering not only the biological factors that prolong life, but also the quality of life of patients and the feelings of family members. This comprehensive evaluation method can better balance medical technology and humanistic care, and provide more appropriate treatment plans for patients.

In medical education, integrating the holistic concept of traditional Chinese medicine into teaching can significantly improve medical students' understanding of medical ethics and their humanistic care ability in future clinical practice. Through this educational model, medical students learn to conduct a comprehensive consideration when facing ethical challenges and improve their comprehensive decision-making ability.

In a word, the holistic concept of traditional Chinese culture provides an important theoretical support and practical guidance for the development of modern medical ethics with its profound cultural background and strong humanistic concern, and shows the unique value and wide application potential in the field of global medical ethics.

2.3 The Chinese traditional medical spirit helps to emphasize ethics and professional integrity in medical ethics

The medical spirit has an important influence in modern medical ethics practice. It is not only a general term for the technology and method of treatment, but also contains the moral cultivation, professional responsibility and respect for life of doctors, which provides a new perspective and method for the ethical and moral construction in modern medical practice.

In the traditional Chinese medicine culture, the image of doctors has broken through the pure technical expert and risen to the role model of morality. This concept has been introduced into modern medical ethics, and emphasized that doctors should not only master professional skills, but also possess noble professional ethics such as honesty, compassion and respect. The medical spirit can promote doctors to adhere to the principle of ethics and make ethical decisions when facing a moral dilemma.

The medical spirit is particularly prominent in the respect for life, which regards that the life is the supreme existence in the universe, and the duty of doctors is to maintain and restore the harmony and balance of life. In modern medical ethics, this respect is translated into a great emphasis on the patient's right to life. In practice, doctors should balance technical feasibility with the interests of patients, and ensure that the treatment plan is scientific and ethical, so as to avoid unnecessary sufferings.

In the promotion of medical justice, the medical spirit also plays a key role. Traditional Chinese medicine advocates that patients should receive appropriate care and treatment in a fair manner regardless of their social status. This idea has evolved into an emphasis on the fairness of medical resource allocation in modern medical ethics, and requires that the provision of medical services should discard prejudice against social and economic backgrounds of patients.

At the same time, the influence of medical spirit on improving medical quality and patient safety should not be ignored. The medical spirit encourages doctors to adhere to continuous learning, self-reflection and improvement in their daily work to ensure that medical operations meet the highest standards of safety and effectiveness, in order to adapt to the rapid development of the medical field.

2.4 The medical ethics cases in the history of China provides rich practical materials for

the teaching and research of medical ethics

The medical ethics cases in the history of China provides valuable practical experience and educational resources for the development of modern medical ethics. Under the profound background of Chinese culture, many famous doctors are not only renowned for their superb medical skill, but also remembered by future generations for their excellent medical ethics and humanistic care for patients.

For example, Hua Tuo is not only known for his excellent medical skills, but also admired by future generation for his care and sense of responsibility towards patients. His deeds of medical ethics are of great significance in contemporary medical ethics education, which guide medical students and practitioners to put the life and health of patients in the first place and treat every patient fairly. As a “medical sage” in history, Sun Simiao repeatedly stressed in his works that doctors should have love, integrity and dedication, and believed that medicine is not only a profession, but also a way of life containing moral self-discipline and noble sentiment. This concept has important implications for modern medical ethics education, and encourages medical students and practitioners to continuously improve professional ethics standards.

Historical cases of medical ethics also play a reference role in dealing with ethical dilemmas in modern medical practice. By studying the ethical decisions of ancient doctors in specific historical and social contexts, modern medical ethics can learn from their wisdom and experience. Especially when dealing with complex issues such as public health crises and medical resource allocations, the treatment methods of ancient doctors provide valuable reference for modern medicine.

These specific historical stories not only enrich the teaching content of medical ethics, but also enhance its attraction and the education effect. Through emotional stories of medical ethics, students are more likely to deeply understand the importance of medical ethics and internalize ethical principles into their own professional codes of conduct.

In short, the cases of medical ethics in the history of China have injected rich teaching resources and practical guidance for the development of modern medical ethics. These cases not only demonstrate the wisdom of medical ethics in the excellent traditional Chinese culture, but also emphasize the importance of flexibly applying ethical principles in medical practice. Digging and applying these historical medical ethics cases in medical education can effectively improve the ethical awareness and professional quality of medical students, and make positive contributions to the construction of a more humanistic medical environment.

3 The Enlightenment and Implementation Direction of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture on the Development of Medical Ethics

In the process of the development of medical ethics, we should make full use of the Confucian principle of benevolence to enhance the trust and respect between doctors and patients, promote the application of medical ethics in individualized treatment with the help of the holistic concept of traditional Chinese medicine, carry forward the ancient medical spirit to strengthen the ethical self-discipline of medical practitioners, and cultivate the ethical awareness and practical ability of medical students by referring to historical cases of medical ethics.

3.1 Promote the Trust and Respect between Doctors and Patients by applying the Confucian Principle of Benevolence

In the practice of modern medical ethics, integrating the Confucian principle of benevolence into the doctor-patient relationship can significantly improve the quality and effect of medical services.

Benevolence in Confucian philosophy is not only a broad care, but also a care that requires doctors to go beyond the technical level, pay attention to the physical and mental health of the patient, understand his or her emotional needs, and respect the patient's social and cultural background. In the process of treatment, doctors should not only pay attention to the condition, but also consider the psychological tolerance of patients and reflect the humanistic care.

The principle of benevolence requires doctors to always prioritize the best interests of patients, fully respect the opinions and choices of patients, and ensure that medical decisions reflect respect for the dignity of patients. At the same time, in the case of limited medical resources, the principle of benevolence also emphasizes the fair distribution of resources to ensure that every patient can get the care they deserve, and especially the focus on vulnerable groups, in order to reduce the injustice in medical services, and promote the fairness of the medical system.

By practicing the principle of benevolence, the doctor-patient relationship is not only a simple relationship between serving and being served, but also a partnership based on trust and respect. This relationship can make patients more willing to communicate openly with doctors, which can help doctors make more accurate diagnoses and develop effective treatment plans. When patients feel the care and kindness of doctors, they are more willing to follow doctors' advice, thus improving the treatment effect and speed of recovery.

At the same time, we can integrate the Confucian principle of benevolence into medical education and vocational training to help medical students and personnel establish correct professional outlook and values. Through the study and research of medical ethics cases, students are able to deeply understand the importance of ethical principles in medical practice and learn how to apply these principles in practical situations, thus cultivating medical practitioners with both high professional skills and high moral sentiments.

The application of the Confucian principle of benevolence in modern medical ethics not only helps to build a harmonious doctor-patient relationship, but also improves the ethics and quality of medical decision-making, promotes the fair distribution of medical resources, and advances the comprehensive development of medical education. The extensive practice of the principle of benevolence can not only improve the ethical standard and service level of the medical industry, but also demonstrate the far-reaching influence and practical value of the excellent traditional Chinese culture in the development of modern medical ethics.

3.2 Promote the Application of Medical Ethics in Patient Individualized Treatment with the Holistic Concept of traditional Chinese Medicine

The holistic concept of traditional Chinese medicine provides a comprehensive and humanized treatment path for the development of modern medical ethics. This path emphasizes the interaction and balance of physical, psychological, social, and environmental factors, and takes health states as the result of many factors working together. This view expands the vision of modern medical ethics, and emphasizes that treatment plans should take into account the patient's overall life situation and psychological needs, rather than just focus on the disease itself.

In clinical practice, the holistic concept of traditional Chinese medicine encourages doctors to consider patients' quality of life and long-term health when formulating treatment plans. For example, when dealing with patients with chronic diseases, doctors not only evaluate their condition, but also consider their eating habits, living environment and psychological states, so as to develop a personalized and comprehensive management plan. This approach aims to alleviate the specific symptoms of patients, and improve their overall quality of life, so as to achieve the goal of "preventive treatment of disease."

In addition, the holistic concept of traditional Chinese medicine emphasizes the combination of

prevention and treatment. In public health management, this concept inspires us to take more proactive preventive measures. For example, in the event of an epidemic outbreak, early risk assessment and intervention can effectively reduce the spread and impact of the disease through a holistic analysis of the community environment and residents' living habits, thereby protecting public health.

The concept of traditional Chinese medicine also promotes the respect for patient autonomy in medical practice. In modern medicine, the respect for patient choices is the core of ethical practice. By applying the holistic concept, doctors are able to more fully understand patient needs, communicate with patients in depth, and ensure that patients give true informed consent after fully understanding their health status and treatment options. It not only respects the dignity of the patient, but also enhances the patient's principal position in medical decision-making.

Integrating the holistic concept of traditional Chinese medicine into medical education and ethics training can help medical students and personnel develop a more comprehensive view of medicine and strengthen their ability to apply ethical principles in practical work. Through case studies and simulation training, students can experience the process of applying the holistic concept to solve problems in complex environments, and improve their practical ability to solve ethical dilemmas.

Overall, the holistic concept of traditional Chinese medicine has profound implications for modern medical ethics, which not only improves the treatment effect and quality of life of patients, but also promotes the broader cultural exchange and understanding in global medical practice.

3.3 Strengthen the Ethical Self-discipline of Medical Practitioners by Carrying Forward the Chinese Ancient Medical Spirit

Promoting the Chinese ancient medical spirit and strengthening the ethical self-discipline of medical practitioners can provide important enlightenment for modern medical ethics practice. As an integral part of excellent traditional Chinese culture, the medical spirit emphasizes not only the improvement of medical skills, but also the moral cultivation and professional responsibility of doctors. These concepts provide the important guiding value for the education and practice of modern medical ethics.

In modern medical practice, the economic pressure and the conflict of interest are increasingly intensified, so it is particularly important to maintain the independence and purity of the medical profession. The medical spirit emphasizes that doctors should give priority to the health and well-being of patients. In the face of conflicts of interest, doctors should adhere to ethical standards and reject any external interference that affects the objectivity of medical decisions, thereby enhancing the credibility of the medical profession and ensuring that patients receive fair and high-quality medical services.

The medical spirit also emphasizes the doctor's sense of responsibility to the society. In the work of public health events and disease prevention, doctors are not only experts in treating individual diseases, but also active promoters of public health. In the face of infectious disease outbreaks or public health crises, doctors should actively participate in disease prevention and control and health education, and use professional knowledge to provide necessary guidance and support to the public. This emphasis on social responsibility is a key aspect of the application of medical ethics in modern medical ethics and an important factor in improving the effectiveness of the entire medical system.

The cultivation of medical spirit should start from medical education. Medical education needs to pay attention to the cultivation of ethics and professional responsibility. By integrating the course content related to the medical spirit, organizing discussions and case analyses, medical students can

establish correct professional outlook and values from the entry stage. By studying the deeds and medical ethics of ancient doctors, the respect and pride of students to medical profession can be stimulated and the persistence and courage to deal with the ethical challenges in their future career can be cultivated.

The promotion of the medical spirit also needs the support from the medical system. Healthcare institutions and health policy makers should work together to create a supportive cultural and institutional environment that supports the medical spirit, such as the establishment of medical ethics committees to address ethical issues, provide guidance and support to doctors, ensure that medical policies and laws protect patients' rights and support doctors to practice medicine in accordance with the medical spirit.

On the whole, the promotion of the medical spirit will improve the quality and effect of medical services, and enhance the social status and public trust of the medical profession. Through the joint efforts of the education, practice and system construction, the core value of medical ethics will get fully embody in modern medical practice, and more humanity, justice, and efficient medical services will be provided to patients.

3.4 Cultivate the Ethical Consciousness and Practical Ability of Medical Students by Using Historical Cases of Medical Ethics

It provides an effective way to understand the complexity of medical ethics by using historical medical ethics cases to train the ethical consciousness and practical ability of medical students in medical education. Historical cases of medical ethics contain rich humanistic feelings and profound ethical conflicts, which provide vivid teaching materials and case analyses for modern medical ethics education. Through these cases, students can intuitively understand the specific context of ethical decision-making, learn how to adhere to ethical principles in complex medical practices, and deal with potential ethical dilemmas.

For example, the famous cases of medical ethics, such as Hua Tuo's refusal of Cao Cao's temptation for money and Zhang Zhongjing's persistent treatment of patients in the plague, demonstrate the noble medical ethics and sense of responsibility displayed by doctors in the face of huge profit temptations or extremely difficult conditions. These stories reveal the individual's moral choices under the specific historical background, and also reflect the social expectation and value evaluation of medical ethics at that time. In medical education, teachers should use these cases to guide students to discuss ethical behavior and decision-making in similar situations, and help students develop critical thinking and moral judgment.

In addition, teaching historical medical ethics cases can also enhance students' identification of medical professional identity. Learning the deeds of ancient doctors and in-depth understanding of the core value and social responsibility of the medical profession will help students better understand their roles and missions in the future career. This sense of professional identity is an important driving force to motivate doctors to continue to follow medical ethical standards in the practical work.

In teaching practice, teachers can adopt interactive teaching methods such as scenario simulation, role playing and group discussion, to make students experience the decision-making process in simulated medical ethical conflicts and understand the possible impact of different decisions on patients and their families. It can not only enhance students' learning interest and participation, but also effectively improve their moral sensitivity and ethical decision-making ability.

4 Conclusion

Through the in-depth analysis of how historical cases of medical ethics, the Confucian principle of benevolence, the holistic concept of traditional Chinese medicine and the ancient medical spirit to enrich and guide the education and practice of modern medical ethics, it is not only conducive to demonstrating the unique value of Chinese culture in the field of global medical ethics, but also provides important cultural resources and practical guidance for contemporary medical ethics. Moreover, it is helpful for medical workers to grow into medical talents with noble medical ethics and strong social responsibility through in-depth study of excellent traditional Chinese culture.

About the Author

Jiawei Cao, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Research direction: Philosophy of information, marxist theory and ideological and political education.

References

- [1] Zhang K, Song HF. Research on Traditional Chinese Medical Ethics and Modern Chinese Medical Ethics [J]. Journal of Jinzhou Medical University (Social Sciences Edition),2024,22(01):36-40.
- [2] Ma YL, Chen MH. Review and Practice Exploration of Core Accomplishment of Medical Ethics [J]. Modern Vocational Education,2022,(12):58-60.
- [3] Liu J. Research on the Cultivation of Humanistic Spirit among Medical Students in the New Era [D]. The Northeast Forestry University, 2021.
- [4] Duan LJ. Research on Traditional Chinese Medical Ethics and Its Inheritance [D]. Guangxi Normal University,2021.
- [5] LIU ZZ. Research on Traditional Chinese Medicine Spirit Cultivation Among Medical Students: Taking Baotou Medical College as an Example [J]. Small and medium-sized enterprise Management and Technology (Mid-Month),2020,(02): 140-142+145.
- [6] Liu T. Debate on Bioethics from the Perspective of Chinese Traditional Culture: A Summary of the 13th Academic Conference on Constructing Chinese Bioethics [J]. Chinese Journal of Medical Ethics,2019,32(10):1365-1368.
- [7] Zhang JQ. Exploration of the Path of Integrating Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture into Medical Students' Medical Ethics Education [J]. Chinese Medical Ethics,2019,32(04):516-519.