

Concerns re grandfathering registration provisions

Broadly the draft grandfathering standard seems to be unduly harsh, and more rigid than that which was applied in Victoria. Those of us who trained in the early eighties did not have the choice of government-approved courses and the climate was one of the NHMRC funding research grants to prove that Acupuncture was only a placebo. We were the pioneers of Chinese Medicine in this country and those of us that managed to create successful practices represent less than 5% of those who graduated from those courses. We travelled overseas to study and work with skilled practitioners and teachers in China, Taiwan, Korea and Japan. We created study groups, mentored new graduates and formed industry organisations such as AACMA, ANTA and ATMS. Now we have Registration and suddenly we are being treated as second-rate members of the profession and regarded as poorly trained and unsuited to practice. I can only wonder at the justification of this intention.

Personally, I was a graduate from the NSW college of Natural Therapies and it pains me to see this course as not being recognised for grandfathering purposes. This college produced such luminaries as Will Maclean, Jane Lyttleton, David Legge and Sue Cochrane. Professor Alan Bensoussan taught a course on acupuncture research at the college and the college principle John McDonald designed the first TCM course that integrated Chinese herbs and Acupuncture. Wade James went on to pioneer TCM courses in Perth and found China West herb company which encourages combination of individual herbs for patient treatments as well as organising seminars and training in China. Not bad for a second-rate course of study.

Personalities aside, the course was a 4 year course with the final semester spent at the Red Cross Hospital in Hangzhou. This internship alone involved 120 hours of lectures and tutorials and clinical practicum of 276 hours of acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine. The course breakdown compares favourably with the accredited courses and yet it is deemed insufficient for grandfathering purposes. How do you explain that?

I can only hope that the Grandfathering provisions will be applied with more common sense.

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