

# The Power of Integration

By Tali Herdevall

Dr. Yair Maimon is a doctor and expert of Chinese medicine, a renowned and groundbreaking researcher in the field of integrative medicine, which combines the two worlds of East and West. In an interview with the Jerusalem Post, he talks about his path, his effective system and about the healing power of plants

“The reason I conduct most of my research on healing plants and botanical materials is that here there is proven results. It's not a ‘nice to have,’ but a ‘must have.’ My passion is to change the way we treat cancer, and I know it's possible,” says Dr. Yair Maimon, an expert in integrative medicine, which combines Western and Chinese medicine.

Dr. Maimon studied Chinese and integrative medicine some thirty years ago in England; He finished his doctorate in Chinese medicine in the US, where he worked in the field of pain medicine in Boston. After his return to Israel, he was among the first who practiced Chinese medicine clinically. He established Medi-cin, a school for Chinese medicine. Over the years, He lectured in Israeli universities, and was one of the firsts to practice Chinese medicine in hospitals- he used acupuncture treatments at the Hillel Yaffe Hospital in Hadera, which was exceptional at the time. Between 1995 and 2010, he directed a complementary medicine unit and an oncology research center at the Ichilov Hospital in Tel Aviv. There he researched the influence of botanical healing plants on the immune system and on cancer. One of the most prominent studies was one about medicinal plants helps reducing the side effects of chemotherapy treatment as well as killing breast cancer cells.



How did you get into integrative medicine?

“I’m a perennial student of Chinese medicine, and I’ve been to China many times, where I’ve worked at an oncology ward in a Beijing hospital. They’ve been using integrative medicine for years. The same patients received chemo and medicinal plants simultaneously, and the results were amazing. Fifteen years ago, I traveled to China to specialize in skin problems and psoriasis. The doctor who was teaching me traveled to a conference for three days. Instead of sitting around and doing nothing, I met with Prof. Yu, a senior doctor who treated cancer. He spoke good English because he studied at Oxford, and that’s rare in China. I sat with him to examine patients, and saw amazing cases of pancreatic cancer patients who took only medicinal herbs and looked excellent. These are things you don’t see in the West. On my way back to Israel, I thought that instead of specializing in skin, I’d specialize in cancer. I returned to China to learn from Prof. Yu, who is a conceptual groundbreaker. I specialized in the field, I brought researchers to Israel, I arranged studies, and today we’re at their level. The results are very promising, and so my insight began.”

What’s the advantage of integrative medicine?

“Western medicine goes for quantity over quality, whereas Chinese medicine focuses on quality. We’re researching the combination of the two. The advantage of the 21st century over the 20th century is that it’s not one or the other, the patient can benefit from both worlds. This is true integration, and the emphasis is on the situation and everyone’s personal ecology. Prevention, which is based on the ability to identify small changes and treat them, is the most important thing. It’s one of the strongest tools in Chinese medicine, whereas in Western medicine, it’s almost nonexistent.

“The advantages are complex thinking, holistic treatment of illnesses, and personalized medicine, which provides an individual response. True breakthroughs will come from the union of these two worlds. It’s a valid fact that a third of the world’s population is treated with Chinese medicine. It has two thousand years of continuous experience, while Western medicine is much younger- only a few decades old.”

Where is Israel located in relation to the world in this field?

“We in Israel are breaking through in the field of integrative medicine. Aside from breakthroughs in health funds, there are things that others across the world will not dare to attempt, but here we will. My goal is to guide cancer treatment in the direction of integrative medicine, botanical plants with medicine, within three to five years. I have treated hundreds of patients in the clinic who have achieved exceptional results thanks to integrative treatment, and I’m always returning to the hospitals and labs in order to develop and progress. In addition, there’s not enough funding for this field. In order to have good studies, you need money. This is the engine of medicine.”

Which example can illustrate this?

“I had a patient with a growth in her intestine, and I treated her with personalized medicine. I grew some of her cancerous cells separately. I exposed them to different plants, and discovered that certain plants killed her cancer cells. This helped her live for a number of years with a good quality of life. In this context, I’ll quote Werner Heisenberg, who developed the Uncertainty Principle: ‘There are two groups of people who come from different schools of thought, and when they both want to solve the same problem, the union between them is a breakthrough.’ This is my feeling.”

Your treatment and research activities range across Israel and the world. What are most of your activities today?

“I’m the director of a research project in cancer research labs at Bar Ilan university, with planned studies on lung cancer in Tel Hashomer hospital to start in due course. Recently, I was appointed chairman of the International Congress of Chinese Medicine, with 750 participants from Israel and abroad. I lecture and teach on Chinese medicine topics across the world, and I run a specialized medical center called Refuot, which focuses on integrated medicine, which is my deep belief. I’m driven by intuition, even though I always have a five year plan... I have a dream of establishing a large center of integrative oncology in leading Israeli hospital, because I think that the field of medicinal plants and botanical materials will be breaking new ground in the coming years. Today, I’m planting the seed, in order to implement Chinese medicine so that it will suit Western medicine and change the way we treat cancer.”

For details: [www.chinese-medicine.org.il](http://www.chinese-medicine.org.il)