

**Abstract**

**Objective:** Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) emphasizes personalized treatment based on an individual's unique constitution, symptoms, and disease patterns. However, the complexity of TCM diagnosis and the subjective nature of treatment decisions can make it challenging to consistently deliver truly personalized care. Artificial Intelligence (AI) offers a powerful solution by analyzing vast amounts of TCM data, including patient records, diagnostic information, and treatment outcomes, to identify personalized treatment strategies. This paper explores the application of AI in various aspects of personalized TCM treatment, including diagnostic pattern recognition, herbal formula optimization, acupuncture point selection, and lifestyle recommendations. We discuss how machine learning, deep learning, and other AI techniques can be used to analyze patient data, predict treatment response, and tailor therapies to individual needs. Furthermore, we address the challenges and opportunities associated with AI-assisted personalized TCM treatment, such as data standardization, model validation, and ethical considerations. This paper argues that AI has the potential to significantly enhance personalized TCM care, leading to improved treatment outcomes and greater patient satisfaction.

**Keywords:**

Artificial intelligence;  
Traditional chinese medicine;  
TCM;  
Personalized medicine;  
Personalized treatment;  
Machine learning;  
Deep learning;  
Diagnostic pattern recognition;  
Herbal formula optimization;  
Acupuncture;  
Lifestyle recommendations;  
Data standardization;  
AI in healthcare.

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# AI-assisted personalized treatment in TCM: Tailoring therapies for individual patients

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Email: [fenellachadwick@gmail.com](mailto:fenellachadwick@gmail.com)**Introduction**

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), with its rich history and holistic approach, emphasizes the importance of personalized treatment. Central to TCM philosophy is the concept of treating the individual, not just the disease. TCM practitioners carefully assess each patient's unique constitution, symptoms, and disease patterns to develop a tailored treatment plan that addresses the root cause of their health issues. This personalized approach, which considers the interconnectedness of the body, mind, and environment, has proven effective for centuries in treating a wide range of conditions. However, the complexity of TCM diagnosis [1-3] and the subjective nature of treatment decisions can present challenges in consistently delivering truly personalized care. TCM diagnosis relies heavily on the practitioner's experience and interpretation of complex symptom patterns, which can vary between individuals and even for the same patient over time. Furthermore, the selection and modification of herbal formulas, acupuncture points, and other TCM therapies often involve a degree of trial and error, making it difficult to optimize treatment strategies for each individual.

The advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) [4-9] offers a transformative opportunity to enhance personalized treatment in TCM. AI, with its ability to process vast amounts of data, identify complex patterns, and make predictions, holds immense promise for improving the precision and personalization of TCM care. By leveraging advanced machine learning algorithms, deep learning models, and other AI techniques, we can analyze patient data, including medical history, diagnostic information, and treatment outcomes, to identify personalized treatment strategies that are tailored to each individual's unique needs. AI can assist TCM practitioners in various aspects of personalized care, including diagnostic pattern recognition, herbal formula optimization, acupuncture point selection, and lifestyle recommendations.

AI-assisted personalized treatment in TCM is not intended to replace the expertise of experienced practitioners but rather to augment their capabilities and provide them with powerful tools to enhance their practice. AI can serve as a valuable assistant, analyzing complex data, identifying subtle patterns, and suggesting potential treatment options, allowing practitioners to focus on the more nuanced aspects of patient care, such as building rapport and providing personalized guidance. For example, AI can analyze a patient's tongue image and pulse data to identify underlying patterns of disharmony and suggest appropriate herbal formulas or acupuncture points. AI can also analyze patient data to predict treatment response and adjust treatment plans accordingly, optimizing

the effectiveness of TCM therapies. Furthermore, AI can analyze patient lifestyle data, such as diet, exercise habits, and sleep patterns, to provide personalized lifestyle recommendations that complement TCM treatments.

The integration of AI into TCM practice can also contribute to the standardization of TCM diagnostic procedures and treatment protocols. By analyzing large datasets of patient data, AI can help identify best practices and develop evidence-based guidelines for personalized TCM care. This can lead to more consistent and effective treatment outcomes, improving the quality of TCM care. Moreover, AI can facilitate the integration of TCM with modern medicine by providing a bridge between TCM's traditional language and modern scientific concepts. By analyzing TCM data in conjunction with biomedical data, AI can help elucidate the mechanisms of action of TCM therapies and contribute to the growing body of scientific evidence supporting the efficacy of TCM. This paper explores the various applications of AI [10-14] in personalized TCM treatment, examining how different AI techniques are being utilized to analyze patient data, predict treatment response, and tailor therapies to individual needs. We also discuss the challenges and opportunities associated with AI-assisted personalized TCM treatment, including data standardization, model validation, and ethical considerations. We argue that AI has the potential to significantly enhance personalized TCM care, leading to improved treatment outcomes and greater patient satisfaction.

### Challenges

While AI offers significant potential for enhancing personalized treatment in TCM, several challenges need to be addressed for successful implementation:

#### Data acquisition and standardization

- **Data scarcity and quality:** Large, high-quality datasets are crucial for training effective AI models. TCM data, however, can be fragmented, inconsistently recorded, and often uses specialized terminology. Acquiring sufficient, well-labeled data for training robust AI models is a major hurdle. Data quality can also be a concern, as variations in diagnostic practices and recording methods can introduce noise and bias.
- **Data heterogeneity:** TCM data comes in various forms, including patient records, diagnostic images (tongue, pulse), herbal formulas, and practitioner notes. Integrating these heterogeneous data sources into a unified framework for AI analysis is a complex task. Standardizing data formats and developing ontologies for TCM concepts are essential.
- **Data privacy and security:** Patient data used in TCM must be handled with utmost care. Ensuring data privacy and security is paramount, especially when dealing with sensitive health information. Robust data governance frameworks and compliance with relevant regulations (e.g., HIPAA) are crucial.

#### Model development and validation

- **Feature engineering:** Identifying and extracting relevant features from TCM data (e.g., tongue characteristics, pulse waveforms, symptom descriptions) [15-19] is crucial for building accurate AI models. This requires deep understanding of TCM principles and expertise in feature engineering techniques. Defining the most relevant features that capture the essence of TCM diagnostic patterns is a complex task.

- **Model interpretability:** "Black box" AI models, while potentially accurate, can be difficult to interpret. Understanding how an AI model arrives at a particular treatment recommendation is crucial for building trust and acceptance among TCM practitioners. Developing more transparent and interpretable AI models is essential.
- **Model validation:** Rigorous validation is necessary to ensure the accuracy and reliability of AI models. This involves testing the models on diverse datasets and comparing their performance against established TCM diagnostic standards and treatment outcomes. Validating AI models in real-world clinical settings is crucial for assessing their practical utility.
- **Integrating TCM knowledge:** Effectively integrating the vast body of TCM knowledge, including herbal properties, formulas, and traditional uses, into AI models is a significant challenge. Developing methods to represent and reason with TCM knowledge within AI frameworks is crucial for building more informed and accurate models.

#### Clinical integration and user acceptance

- **Practitioner acceptance:** Some TCM practitioners may be hesitant to adopt AI-powered tools, fearing that they may replace their expertise. Building trust and acceptance among practitioners is crucial for the successful integration of AI in TCM. Education and training programs can help bridge the gap and demonstrate the value of AI as a supportive tool.
- **Workflow integration:** Integrating AI-powered tools into existing TCM practice workflows and Electronic Health Record (EHR) systems can be technically challenging. Seamless integration is crucial for ensuring the smooth adoption of AI technologies.

- **Patient trust:** Patients need to trust that AI-powered tools are accurate and reliable. Transparency in how AI models are developed and used is essential for building patient trust. Addressing concerns about data privacy and algorithmic bias is also important.

#### Ethical and societal considerations

- **Algorithmic bias:** AI models can inherit biases present in the data they are trained on. Ensuring that the training data is representative of the population and free from bias is crucial for developing fair and equitable AI models. Addressing potential biases in AI algorithms is essential for avoiding disparities in healthcare.
- **Regulatory frameworks:** Clear regulatory frameworks are needed to govern the development and deployment of AI-powered personalized TCM treatment tools. These frameworks should address issues such as data privacy, model validation, and liability.
- **Impact on practitioner autonomy:** It's important to ensure that AI serves as a support tool and does not diminish the role of practitioner expertise and judgment in TCM practice. Maintaining the human element in TCM care is crucial.

#### Bridging the gap between TCM and modern science

- **Translating TCM concepts:** TCM concepts, often described using traditional Chinese terminology, can be difficult to translate into a format that AI can understand. Bridging the gap between TCM's traditional language and modern scientific concepts is a significant challenge.

- **Integrating TCM with modern medicine:** Integrating AI-powered [20-23] personalized TCM treatment with modern medical practices requires collaboration between TCM practitioners and conventional medical professionals. Building bridges between these two approaches is essential for realizing the full potential of integrated healthcare.

### Benefits

AI-assisted personalized treatment in TCM offers a multitude of potential benefits, significantly enhancing the quality and effectiveness of patient care:

#### Enhanced precision and personalization

- **Improved diagnostic accuracy:** AI can analyze vast amounts of patient data, including complex symptom patterns, tongue and pulse information, and medical history, to identify subtle patterns and correlations that may be missed by the human eye. This can lead to more accurate and personalized diagnoses, forming the foundation for tailored treatment plans.
- **Tailored treatment plans:** AI can analyze individual patient data to develop personalized treatment plans that are specific to their unique constitution, symptoms, and disease patterns. This aligns with TCM's core principle of treating the individual, not just the disease.
- **Optimized herbal formula selection:** AI can assist in selecting and modifying herbal formulas based on individual patient needs, considering factors such as symptom presentation, constitution, and potential herb-drug interactions. This can lead to more effective and targeted herbal therapies.
- **Personalized acupuncture point selection:** AI [24-26] can analyze patient data to recommend specific acupuncture points that are most appropriate for their condition, maximizing the therapeutic benefits of acupuncture treatments.

#### Improved efficiency and effectiveness

- **Reduced treatment time:** AI can help streamline the diagnostic and treatment planning process, potentially reducing the time required to develop personalized treatment plans.
- **Improved treatment outcomes:** By providing more precise and personalized treatment recommendations, AI can contribute to improved treatment outcomes and greater patient satisfaction.
- **Objective assessment of treatment response:** AI can analyze patient data to objectively assess treatment response and make adjustments to the treatment plan as needed, optimizing the effectiveness of TCM therapies.

#### Enhanced TCM knowledge and standardization

- **Knowledge preservation and dissemination:** AI can help preserve and disseminate TCM knowledge by encoding expert knowledge and diagnostic experience into AI models. This can make TCM expertise more accessible to a wider audience, including practitioners in remote areas.
- **Standardized diagnostic procedures:** AI can contribute to the standardization of TCM diagnostic procedures and treatment protocols, reducing variability in care and promoting consistency in treatment approaches.
- **Evidence-based TCM:** By analyzing large datasets [27-29] of patient data, AI can help identify best practices and de-

velop evidence-based guidelines for personalized TCM care, strengthening the scientific foundation of TCM.

#### Integration of TCM with modern medicine

- **Bridging the gap:** AI can facilitate the integration of TCM with modern medicine by providing a bridge between TCM's traditional language and modern scientific concepts. This can promote collaboration between TCM practitioners and conventional medical professionals.
- **Personalized integrative care:** AI can help integrate TCM therapies with modern medical treatments, creating personalized integrative care plans that combine the strengths of both approaches.
- **Improved patient engagement and satisfaction**
- **Empowered patients:** AI-powered tools can provide patients with a better understanding of their condition and treatment options, empowering them to actively participate in their care.
- **Personalized lifestyle recommendations:** AI can analyze patient lifestyle data to provide personalized recommendations for diet, exercise, and stress management, empowering patients to take control of their health.
- **Increased patient satisfaction:** By providing more personalized and effective care, AI can contribute to increased patient satisfaction and improved patient-provider relationships.

#### Scalability and accessibility

- **Increased access to personalized TCM:** AI-powered tools can make personalized TCM care more accessible to a wider population, including those in remote or underserved areas.
- **Scalable solutions:** AI-powered solutions can be scaled to meet the growing demand for personalized healthcare, making personalized TCM care more efficient and cost-effective.

#### Future works

The future of AI-assisted personalized treatment in TCM is filled with exciting possibilities, building upon current advancements and addressing existing challenges. Here are some key directions for future works:

#### Enhanced data integration and utilization

- **Multi-modal data fusion:** Integrating multi-modal data, including patient records, diagnostic images (tongue, pulse, facial), genetic information, lifestyle data (diet, exercise, sleep), and environmental factors, can provide a more holistic view [30-32] of the patient and improve the accuracy of AI-driven personalized treatment recommendations.
- **Longitudinal data analysis:** Analyzing longitudinal patient data, including treatment responses and health outcomes over time, can help refine AI models and personalize treatment plans dynamically. This allows for adaptive and responsive care.
- **Real-world data integration:** Integrating real-world data from clinical practice, such as patient-reported outcomes and electronic health records, can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of personalized TCM treatments and inform future research.



- **Data standardization and ontologies:** Developing standardized terminologies, ontologies, and data formats for TCM concepts is crucial for enabling data sharing, interoperability, and the development of robust AI models.

#### Advanced AI model development and explainability

- **Explainable AI (XAI):** Developing XAI models is essential for building trust among TCM practitioners and patients. XAI can provide insights into how AI arrives at a particular treatment recommendation, making the decision-making process more transparent and understandable.
- **Personalized model development:** Developing personalized AI models that are tailored to individual patient characteristics, such as age, gender, constitution, and specific health conditions, can further enhance the precision of personalized treatment.
- **Reinforcement learning:** Exploring the use of reinforcement learning to develop AI agents that can learn optimal treatment strategies by interacting with simulated or real-world patient environments. This allows for dynamic adaptation of treatments.
- **Integrating TCM theory:** Developing methods to effectively integrate TCM theory and principles, such as Yin-Yang, Five Elements, and Qi, into AI models is crucial for building more informed and accurate models.

#### Enhanced clinical integration and user experience

- **Seamless EHR integration:** Developing seamless integration of AI-powered personalized treatment tools with existing Electronic Health Record (EHR) systems is essential for streamlining TCM practice and facilitating data exchange.
- **User-friendly interfaces:** Creating intuitive and user-friendly interfaces for AI-powered tools is crucial for ensuring their easy adoption by TCM practitioners and patients. This should consider the specific needs and workflows of TCM practice.
- **Mobile health integration:** Integrating AI-powered personalized TCM recommendations with mobile health platforms can empower patients to actively manage their health and receive personalized guidance on lifestyle, diet, and exercise.

#### Validation and evaluation

- **Rigorous clinical trials:** Conducting rigorous clinical trials to evaluate the effectiveness of AI-assisted personalized TCM treatments is essential for demonstrating their clinical utility and promoting their adoption.
- **Comparative effectiveness research:** Conducting comparative effectiveness research to compare AI-assisted personalized TCM treatments with standard TCM care or conventional medical treatments.
- **Cost-effectiveness analysis:** Performing cost-effectiveness analyses to assess the economic value of AI-assisted personalized TCM treatment.

#### Ethical and societal considerations

- **Addressing algorithmic bias:** Future research should focus on identifying and mitigating potential biases in AI algorithms to ensure fairness and equity in personalized TCM care.

- **Data privacy and security:** Implementing robust data privacy and security measures to protect sensitive patient information used in AI-driven personalized TCM treatment.

- **Transparency and trust:** Promoting transparency in how AI models are developed and used to build trust among TCM practitioners and patients.

- **Regulatory frameworks:** Developing clear regulatory frameworks for the development and deployment of AI-powered personalized TCM treatment tools.

#### Interdisciplinary collaboration

- **Bridging the gap:** Fostering interdisciplinary collaboration among TCM practitioners, AI researchers, data scientists, clinicians, ethicists, and policymakers is essential for realizing the full potential of AI in personalized TCM treatment.

#### Conclusion

In conclusion, the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to personalized treatment in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) represents a significant advancement with the potential to transform healthcare. TCM, with its emphasis on individual constitution and tailored therapies, aligns perfectly with the principles of personalized medicine. However, the complexity of TCM diagnosis and the subjective nature of treatment decisions have historically posed challenges to consistently delivering truly personalized care. AI offers a powerful solution by analyzing vast amounts of data and identifying complex patterns to enhance the precision and personalization of TCM treatments.

This paper has explored the various ways in which AI can be leveraged to personalize TCM care, from improving diagnostic accuracy and optimizing herbal formula selection to personalizing acupuncture point selection and lifestyle recommendations. We have discussed the potential of AI to augment the expertise of TCM practitioners, enabling them to provide more targeted and effective treatments. AI can also contribute to the standardization of TCM procedures, preserve valuable TCM knowledge, and facilitate the integration of TCM with modern medicine.

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