

## **Project report Ulaanbaatar – Traditional Medicine – August 2019**

Visit there from 21 – 24 August, 2019.

Participant: Prof Popp.

The visit was made on a short decision to get an overview about traditional medicine still in this year within the BMG project.

The visits were done with Dr. Gantumur and Suvdaa.

We report only points which may be important for hepatitis transmission pathways.

### **State University for Traditional Medicine:**

Talk with epidemiologist and different persons.

They belong to Ministry of Education.

Next to new University Clinics of the Japanese.

They will open soon, starting with outpatient area.

They do cupping (wet and not wet, with and without blood letting).

But also without blood letting there may be body fluid in the cupping glasses so that it should be handled the same was.

There are two sinks to reprocess the glasses:



We recommended to use cleaner, then rinse, then disinfect (they have cleaner and disinfectant from Ecolab), then rinse with demineralized water, then dry and then sterilize.

At the moment, they have a sterilizer/drying/heating oven there which is working, as said, around 100°C.



We recommend an autoclave because it is faster. It might be possible to have the glasses open in it.

Mostly they use single-use needles and scalpels for acupuncture and blood letting. Acupuncture needles from Gold and Silver are reused and reprocessed.

Also moxibustion was shown which seems not to be a risk for blood borne infections. It seems that education books for traditional medicine are available. But there are no standards for reprocessing of instruments, no SOPs. Also IPC and reprocessing are not taught in the study.

The biggest risks seem the cupping glasses with blood or body fluid in it. Until now they are at least cleaned and then heated in some way. So they are not sterile, but the transmission risk for hepatitis may not be as high as with endoscopes or in dental medicine.

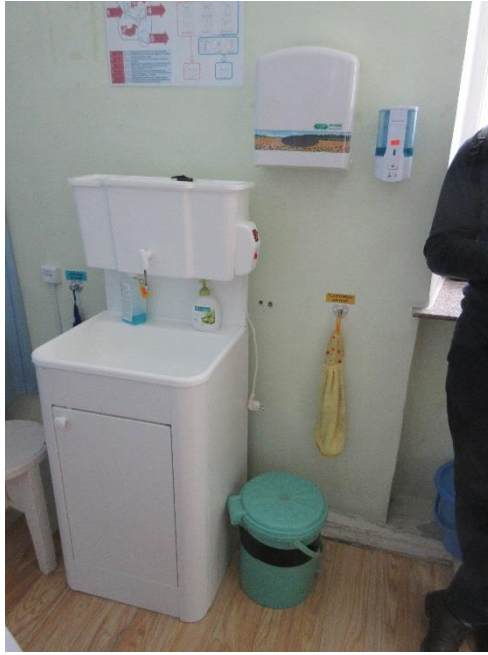
### **Institute of Traditional Medicine and Technology:**

Talk with director and different workers.

They also belong to the Ministry of Education because they do research.

They are in a 83 years old building which was not renovated over many years.

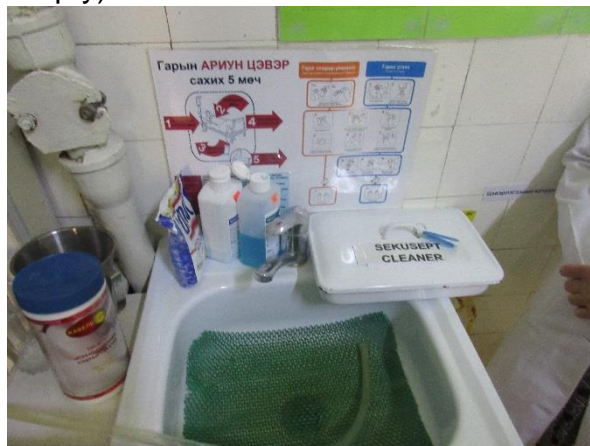
Therefore, they do not have flowing water in many rooms and they use water from small basins over the sinks:



They have 130 beds (!!!) and many patients come from outside, therefore stay there for some days.  
More or less they have the same program like university clinics for traditional medicine.



Reprocessing is done in a room with cleaner and disinfectant from Ecolab (it was said, but bottles were empty).



The female worker there was ordered from home and she said that she was away for 2 months now and in this time they would give reprocessing to external companies. It was not really clear how they do reprocessing. We gave the same recommendations as above.

It seems that they use a drying oven for drying in the acupuncture area.

In sterilization area it was said that they dry with some paper which we did not see.

There is also an oven which was described to us as dryer. But on the disinfection plan is written, that it is working with 180°C and 30 minutes. So in that case it would be an air sterilizer.

At the end, the situation could not really be solved about this issue.

In another room (only for preparing wound dressings?), we saw an old Russian autoclave which is used and – as it seems – also controlled with bioindicators.



Also they reuse Gold and Silver acupuncture needles and reprocess them.

Before acupuncture and cupping, skin is disinfected with spirit 70 % - not bad.

Also some somatic medicine is given, eg infusions.

In the consequence the situation about the reprocessing of cutting glasses is not really clear, but the risk estimation is the same as above.

### **Sky hospital:**

The private hospital was opened in 2008 with 8 beds, since 2014 they have 20 beds. They have 22 workers, of whom are 8 doctors and 7 nurses.

They have Internal Medicine, Neurology, Gynecology and Traditional Medicine.

There is no sterilization there and they have a contract with an external company.

There are few things to autoclave, only once per week as they said.

Mostly they use single-use products. E.g. single-use needles cost 45,000 Tugrig for 50 packs a 10 pieces.



They do not use Golden and Silver needles because they do not see any advantage. They use cupping glasses from plastic which are evacuated by a pump.



They also use them for wet cupping, that means blood letting.

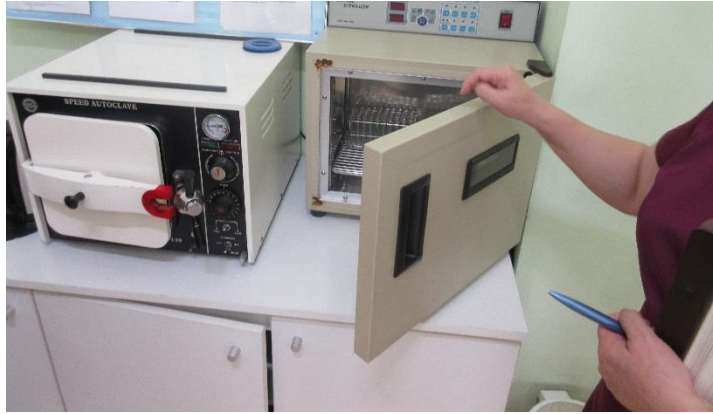
The cupping glasses are disinfected in some product from Russia with Chlorine.

We gave the usual proposal: cleaning, disinfection, sterilization.

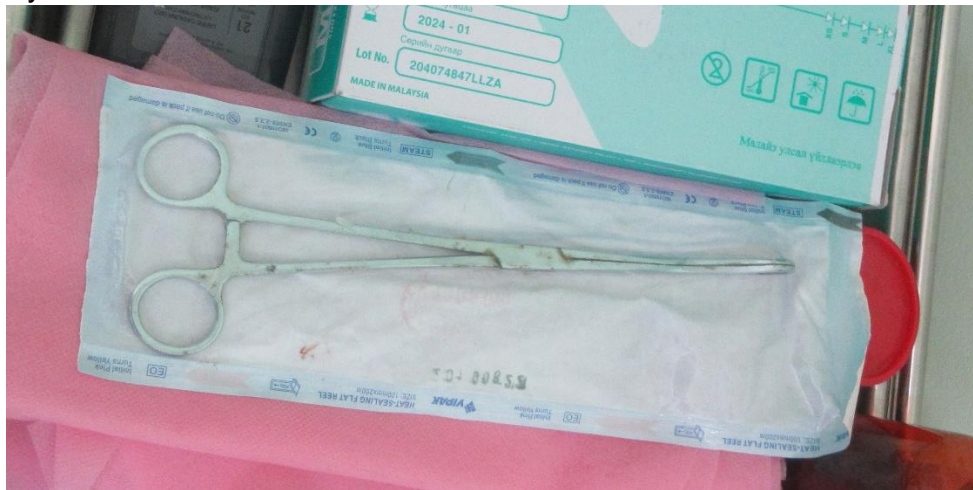
They still have pieces of soap and dispensers for paper towels are empty. We gave the usual informations: Fluid soap and so on.

Paper towels are mandatory from MoH since some years according to Dr Gantumur.

They have a lab for blood and urine. They also make hepatitis markers. In the lab, there are two small sterilisers.



One is a small autoclave and we recommended to use bioindicators. The other one is an air sterilizer but only with temperature of 120°C which cannot work. In gynecology room we found a sterilized tongs in paper wrapping. But it was completely corroded.



They say this is why they put it in Chlorine. We recommended to use only cleaner before giving to external company. But basically it shows that on both sides it is not working well about reprocessing: Such a corroded tongs should never be used.

### **Chingeltej distric hospital – Traditional Medicine:**

Talk with Chinzo, Uka, traditional medicine doctor.

We saw wet cupping: First hot cupping, then using a sterile blade to make small holes in skin after disinfection with alcohol/spirit. Then cupping again. This was for problems with knees. Wet cupping is done only once a year per patient.



The blood is given in waste and the cup in water with washing powder. After that they use Hexanios G+R solution which is a Quat. After that drying. We recommended the usual way. Blades and so on are single-use.

**Hosvansemeru hospital:**

On border to ger district. We talked with director and one assistant.

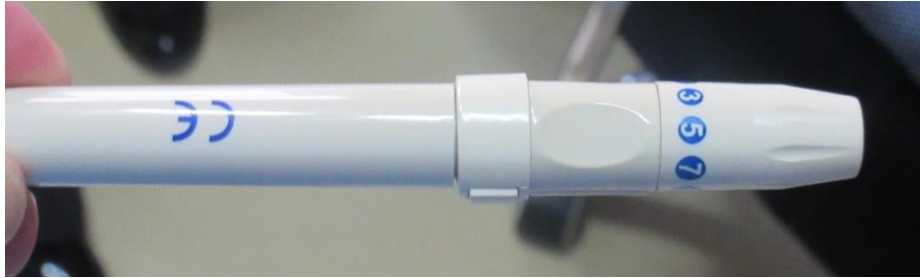
Hospital opened 10 years ago. Now has 18 beds – inside everything with wood, so that patient should feel nice.

Director tries to avoid therapy with open blood. Only sometimes wet cupping.

On most sinks is fluid soap, paper towels and hand disinfectant with 70 % ethanol. Sterilization unit is small, Russian disinfectant used. It seems no cleaner. A heating oven there for cups.

Cups are made from plastics – problems see above.

Also blood diagnosis was done for all of us. A problem is the automated blood lancet which might be contaminated inside despite the needle is always changed. They should clarify that.



We saw preparation of an infusion and it was not good: All was done in a small box despite the table was much bigger. There was blood in the box, maybe from former patients. Everything very narrow.



This should be changed.

But it is not a typical problem of Traditional Medicine and might happen also in somatic hospitals.

### **In short**

We talked with around 10-15 people.

The main problem is wet cupping. The cups are sometimes cleaned, sometimes also disinfected. Mostly no sterilization. Skin seems often to be disinfected with alcohol or spirit. At the end there is some cleaning of the cups and, therefore, some sort of reduction of bacteria and viruses. So in my opinion the risk for transmission is not as



high as with endoscopes and dentistry (hand pieces) because their channels are often not cleaned at all.

For acupuncture usually single-use needles are used. Also for scalpelles and blades.

Transmission:

<b>way</b>	<b>importance</b>	<b>comments</b>
Blood products		
Traditional medicine (bloodletting, acupuncture)	medium	Acupuncture mostly single-use needles; Wet cupping is risky
Self injection at home		
Tattoo (eyebrows, lips)		
Beauty shops		
Hair cutting		
toothbrushes		
Reprocessing of medical devices		
Endoscopes		
Many iv drugs in hospital without indication		
Dentists - reprocessing		
Dentists – hand pieces		
delivery		
Insufficient vaccination		
Sexual transmission		
Virus carriers in staff		
Plastic surgery		

WP, 5 September, 2019