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Improving Vocal Function Using Qigong - Myth or Fact?

Background: Qigong, or Life Energy Cultivation, is a practice of breathing, meditation and martial arts to achieved a balanced life energy. There is a general sceptism about qigong as it is often presented or promoted with a mythical flavor. Indeed, the term “Qigong” was first introduced only about 50 years ago but the practice of Life Energy Cultivation can be traced back to more than a century. This paper will introduce a “Phonatory Qigong” exercise which has been practiced in Chinese monasteries for centuries. This specific qigong method aims at improving vocal function through practicing voicing exercise together with a series of martial arts.

Objective: This paper will review the “Phonatory Qigong Exercise” based on six practice words.

Methodology: Literature review was conducted by searching through the classical Chinese medicine literature. The Phonatory Qigong Exercise has been termed the “Six-Word Qigong Verses”.

Results: Literature review found the first documnetation of “Six-Word Qigong Verses” can be dated back to 1600 years ago. It has been practiced as a standard daily exercise in Chinese Tao Monasteries for centuries. Contemporary Qigong experts agreed on the choice of the “six words” that are to be used in the exercise. The six practice words are: xu, he, hu, si, chui, and xi. It is claimed tha the martial art exercise combined with phonation of these sixw words promote and cultivate general life energy.

Conclusion: Despite the popularity of this Phonatory Qiging Exercise and extensive classical Chinese medicine literature write about the usefulness of the exercise, there is no scientific validation of the method. Given its close resemblance of other vocal exercises used

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