

# Demographics; training and practice patterns of practitioners of folk medicine in Taiwan: A survey of the Taipei metropolitan area

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## 摘要

### Abstract

**Objectives:** The purpose of this study was to investigate the demographics, training, and practice patterns of folk medicine practitioners, their opinions toward statutory regulation of folk medicine, and the formal education and credentialing for folk medicine providers in the metropolitan Taipei area.

**Design:** A cross-sectional survey design was used.

**Subjects:** Included in the survey were 200 folk medicine practitioners in Taipei city and 200 folk medicine practitioners in Taipei county.

**Instrument:** The survey questionnaire consisted of 3 domains including demographics and training; practice patterns; and opinions toward statutory regulation of folk medicine and formal education and credentialing for Tuina, Ba Guan, Gua Sha, and reflexology providers.

**Results:** The response rates ranged from 86.3% to 99.5%. A typical folk medicine provider in the Taipei metropolitan area was a middle-aged man with a high school degree who worked about 50 hours a week. The majority

of the providers in the Taipei metropolitan area received their training through apprenticeship. Years of training and experience varied widely among these practitioners. About 80% had received more than one year of training prior to starting their practice. Adult men and women were their major clientele. The major treatment modalities they offered were Tuina, Gua Sha, Ba Guan, reflexology, and meridian massage. The majority of the respondents agreed that practitioners should receive formal education and training and agreed that certifying the qualifications of folk medicine practitioners is necessary.

Conclusion: Findings from the present survey provide an understanding of the training and practice patterns of Taiwanese folk medicine practitioners, highlight folk medicine practitioners' needs for formal education and training, and stress the importance of statutory regulation of folk medicine in Taiwan.