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ACU-FORUM

From *Huangdi Neijing* to Systems Medicine: Report on the Inaugural International Symposium on Acu-Reflex Point Acupuncture and the Sixty-Year Medical Legacy of Professor Guanyuan Jin

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Abstract—On June 14, 2026, the Inaugural International Symposium on Acu-Reflex Point Acupuncture (ARPA 2026) was held via Zoom, organized by the International Institute of Systems Medicine (IISM) and co-organized by the Canadian Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine (CITCM). The meeting brought together physicians, scholars, and clinicians from China, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, South Africa, and other countries to commemorate sixty years of medical practice by Professor Guanyuan Jin and to discuss the future development of acupuncture in the context of systems medicine. This conference report summarizes the opening addresses, keynote lecture, selected clinical presentations, and post-meeting reflections shared during the symposium. Topics ranged from the reported use of thermal imaging in Quadrilateral Space Syndrome to fifteen practice-based case presentations illustrating the use of Acu-Reflex Point Acupuncture across pain medicine, rehabilitation, and veterinary care. Professor Jin's keynote lecture traced an intellectual line from the *Huangdi Neijing* to neuromodulation and systems medicine, arguing that acupuncture should be understood through dynamic body-surface reflections and systemic regulation rather than fixed point prescriptions alone. The symposium highlighted a growing interest among physicians trained in modern biomedicine in frameworks capable of integrating complexity, clinical individuality, and whole-person care. As a qualitative meeting report rather than a controlled clinical study, this article is descriptive in scope and is intended to document the main scientific and intellectual themes that emerged from ARPA 2026.

Keywords: Acu-Reflex Point Acupuncture, systems medicine, neuromodulation, *Huangdi Neijing*, acupuncture modernization, integrative medicine, clinical reflexology

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INTRODUCTION

Academic conferences are often convened to commemorate the past. Occasionally, they also illuminate the future.

On June 14, 2026, physicians, scholars, and healthcare professionals from around the world gathered online for the Inaugural International Symposium on Acu-Reflex Point Acupuncture (ARPA 2026), held in conjunction with a celebration of Professor Guanyuan Jin's sixty years in medicine. What began as a commemorative academic event gradually unfolded into a broader reflection on the past, present, and future of acupuncture medicine.

More than 200 participants from China, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, South Africa, and other countries shared a common concern: not only how acupuncture is practiced, but how an ancient medical tradition may continue to evolve in the era of systems medicine, neuroscience, and artificial intelligence.

This article is presented as a conference report for the journal's news and activities section. It summarizes the principal opening remarks, keynote themes, selected clinical presentations, and representative participant reflections from ARPA 2026, with particular attention to the symposium's emphasis on systems medicine and clinical practice.

A Global Gathering of Acupuncture Scholars

The symposium attracted wide attention from the international acupuncture and traditional medicine communities. Professor Baoyan Liu, President of the World Federation of Acupuncture-Moxibustion Societies (WFAS) and Academician of the China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences, delivered the opening remarks. He paid tribute to Professor Guanyuan Jin's six decades of contributions to clinical practice,

research, and education, emphasizing his long-standing efforts to connect traditional Chinese medicine with systems science and modern neuroscience and recognizing his role in advancing acupuncture toward greater precision, scientific interpretation, and international communication.

Other distinguished speakers, including Dr. Yongming Li, Professor Qiang Xie of Jiangxi University of Chinese Medicine, Dr. Yemeng Chen, President of the New York College of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Professor Mingzhu Ye, and Dr. Hui Wei, President of the American Traditional Chinese Medicine Association, also offered congratulatory remarks and praised Professor Jin's sustained contributions to acupuncture medicine.

In addition, the symposium received congratulatory messages from more than thirty presidents of universities and colleges of traditional Chinese medicine, leaders of professional organizations, and internationally recognized experts. In all, more than 200 scholars and clinicians attended the meeting online to witness this academic occasion.

Clinical Practice at the Center

One of the symposium's most distinctive features was its strong focus on clinical medicine. Unlike meetings dominated by abstract discussion, the presentations were grounded in real-world therapeutic practice and case-based clinical observation.

Professor Shiming Wu, founder of the Department of Pain Medicine at Xinqiao Hospital in Chongqing and President of the Infrared Pain Medicine Committee of the China Association for the Promotion of Traditional Chinese Medicine Research, presented what was described during the meeting as an early international report on the use of thermal imaging analysis in the diagnosis and treatment of Quadrilateral Space Syndrome. His presentation suggested that modern imaging technologies may help clinicians identify more precise therapeutic targets, offering one example of how classical clinical reasoning can be examined through contemporary technical tools.

Fifteen disciples from the ARPA Heritage Program subsequently shared clinical experiences involving conditions such as depression, chronic dizziness, trigeminal neuralgia, osteoarthritis, post-stroke dysfunction, acute low back pain, and disorders treated in veterinary practice. The approaches discussed included body acupuncture, auricular acupuncture, manual therapies, and moxibustion. Presentations also addressed Professor Jin's theories of auricular acupuncture and explored conceptual parallels between Acu-Reflex Point principles and Master Tung's Extraordinary Points.

Taken together, these case-based presentations illustrated the broad clinical range attributed to ARPA and its emphasis on individualized, dynamic point selection. At the same time, it should be emphasized that these reports were presented as practice-based clinical observations rather than as controlled comparative studies; accordingly, their significance within this report is descriptive and illustrative rather than confirmatory.

Sixty Years of Inquiry: The Keynote Address

The intellectual centerpiece of the symposium was Professor Guanyuan Jin's 45-minute keynote lecture, entitled *The Past, Present, and Future of Acupuncture Medicine: Reflections from the Perspective of Systems Medicine*, delivered in Chinese and simultaneously interpreted into English by the author.

Drawing upon six decades of clinical practice and academic reflection, Professor Jin traced the development of acupuncture from *Huangdi Neijing* to modern systems medicine, moving conceptually from Ashi points to reflex points and from homeostasis theory to neuromodulation. His lecture proposed a continuous intellectual arc linking classical Chinese medicine with contemporary neuroscience and complexity science.

His central argument was that the essence of acupuncture lies not primarily in fixed points or rigid prescriptions, but in the regulation of the organism through dynamic body-surface reflections. From this perspective, the movement from fixed acupoints to dynamic reflex points was presented not as a departure from tradition, but as a deepening of its clinical logic.

Professor Jin further argued that modern acupuncture should continue to measure itself against clinical efficacy and that systems medicine, neuromodulation, and artificial intelligence may offer new conceptual languages through which classical insights can be revisited and further developed. He repeatedly emphasized that what should be transmitted across generations is not merely a technique, but also a spirit of inquiry and a philosophy of medicine grounded in openness, humility before complexity, and close attention to the suffering patient.

Professor Guanyuan Jin: Six Decades of Medical Exploration

The symposium also provided an opportunity to review the six-decade medical career of Professor Guanyuan Jin, recognized as an Inaugural Overseas Grandmaster of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Professor Jin began studying acupuncture in 1966 and was trained by several renowned Chinese acupuncture masters, including Professors Mianzhai Jiao, Kuishan Zheng, and Jia Wei. He graduated from Zhejiang Medical University in 1982 with training in clinical medicine and physiology, and later completed postdoctoral research at the Medical College of Wisconsin in 1989.

Over the course of his career, Professor Jin has served as Honorary Professor at Guangzhou University of Chinese Medicine, Distinguished Clinical Expert at Beijing University of Chinese Medicine, Honorary Professor at the Canadian Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Visiting Professor at the New York College of Traditional Chinese Medicine and the Swiss University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, reviewer for research grants at the U.S. National Institutes of Health, and board advisor on traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture to the State of Wisconsin.

He continues to practice in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and to teach doctoral students at the Atlantic Institute of Oriental Medicine. Across these activities, the symposium presenters repeatedly emphasized a core feature of his career: the effort to connect clinical work, education, and conceptual reconstruction.

For more than sixty years, Professor Jin has developed the systems medicine-based protocol termed Acu-Reflex Point Acupuncture (ARPA), reinterpreting the traditional meridian system through reflexology and using concepts from cybernetics, homeostasis, and systems theory to explain acupuncture phenomena. He has authored twenty-eight books in Chinese and English, including *Contemporary Medical Acupuncture: A Systems Approach* (Springer and Higher Education Press, 2007), *Clinical Acupuncture Reflexology* (Beijing Science and Technology Press, 2004; Tsinghua University Press, 2017 and 2022), and *Principles of Systems Medicine* (China Science and Technology Press, 2017; World Book Inc., 2019).

Since 2015, nearly two hundred physicians and acupuncturists worldwide have joined the ARPA Heritage Program as disciples under Professor Jin's mentorship, across nine successive cohorts (reference 1).

When Modern Medicine Looks Back: Why Systems Thinking Resonated

A notable feature of the symposium was the strong response from physicians trained in modern biomedicine. Among the participants were specialists in pain medicine, rehabilitation medicine, physiology, ophthalmology, surgery, and biomedical research, including some with training or professional experience at major academic institutions such as Harvard University, and the University of California, San Francisco.

Their reactions raised an important question: why might physicians deeply immersed in modern medicine find themselves drawn to an acupuncture-centered symposium? The reflections shared after the meeting suggested that the answer may lie less in acupuncture's historical antiquity than in the ability of systems-oriented frameworks to address the complexity of real clinical practice.

Throughout the twentieth century, modern medicine achieved remarkable advances through specialization and reductionist methods. Yet many clinicians eventually encounter disorders—such as chronic pain syndromes, functional disorders, stress-related illness, and multi-system conditions—that do not fit neatly within a single explanatory framework. In this context, systems medicine was described by several participants as a complementary orientation that asks not only what the parts are, but also how the parts interact.

Seen in this light, the appeal of acupuncture for many modern physicians may arise in part from its long-standing concern with relationships, regulation, and dynamic balance. The symposium therefore became not only a discussion about acupuncture, but also a broader reflection on the enduring challenge of understanding the whole person in medicine.

A Journey Across Medical Boundaries

Among the participants, Dr. Feng Lu, a pain medicine specialist practicing at Marshfield Medical Center–Weston in the United States, offered reflections that captured this cross-disciplinary spirit. Trained in physiology in Canada and later in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and Pain Medicine in the United States, she noted that the symposium felt less like a routine professional meeting than like an intellectual journey across different medical systems.

In a subsequent reflection, Dr. Lu observed that increasing clinical experience had convinced her that the complexity of human disease often exceeds the explanatory power of any single medical theory. She argued that different medical traditions should communicate, learn from one another, and evolve together on the basis of scientific evidence and clinical practice, while keeping the relief of suffering and restoration of health as their common aim.

She found particular resonance in the systems medicine framework presented at the symposium, noting that concepts such as dynamic balance, bidirectional regulation, and system reconstruction offered new ways to think about complex clinical phenomena. Regarding Professor Jin's keynote, she remarked that it addressed not only acupuncture techniques, but also broader historical, scientific, philosophical, and humanistic questions.

Her perspective was echoed by Dr. Rui Weng, President of the Wisconsin Society of Acupuncturists and a disciple of Professor Jin's ARPA Heritage Program, who described the keynote as connecting "the ancient past with the future" and praised Professor Jin's conceptual movement from point to line to surface. Dr. Fei Zhen of Dongzhimen Hospital at Beijing University of Chinese Medicine also emphasized the practical adaptability of ARPA across acupuncture departments, orthopedics, rehabilitation medicine, neurology, traditional medicine, and veterinary settings.

Beyond Technique: The Spirit of Medicine

A deeper lesson emerging from the symposium was that what deserves transmission across generations is not a therapeutic method alone. Techniques evolve, scientific explanations change, and technologies advance. The history of acupuncture has never been one of rigid preservation, but rather one of continuous reinterpretation.

What appears to endure across these transitions are several underlying principles: that the body should be approached as an integrated whole, that health involves ongoing adaptation rather than a static state, and that internal disturbances may manifest on the body's surface in clinically observable ways. In the language of the symposium, these ideas were discussed in relation to neuromodulation, systems theory, and whole-person care.

From this perspective, acupuncture was presented not simply as a set of points and needles, but as a way of thinking about order within complexity, balance within biological systems, and the human being behind every symptom. This emphasis helps explain why Professor Jin repeatedly returned to the importance of scientific curiosity, conceptual openness, and clinical humility.

From the Huangdi Neijing to Systems Medicine

More than two thousand years ago, the *Huangdi Neijing* described correspondences between the interior and exterior of the body and emphasized the unity of the organism. In the symposium's discussions, these classical formulations were repeatedly revisited as intellectual predecessors to modern efforts to understand regulation, adaptation, and interdependence in living systems.

Today, systems biology, neuroscience, neuromodulation, and artificial intelligence are providing new conceptual and technical languages through which such ideas may be reconsidered. The dialogue between classical acupuncture and contemporary science was therefore presented not simply as a contrast between East and West or between tradition and modernity, but as a conversation about biological complexity itself.

In this sense, the vitality of acupuncture may depend less on remaining unchanged than on sustaining its capacity for renewal. The symposium suggested that future developments may be shaped not only by needles or named acupoints, but by a deeper effort to understand regulation, adaptation, and homeostasis within living systems.

Scope and Limitations of This Report

This article is intended as a qualitative conference report based on presentations and participant reflections shared during ARPA 2026. It does not present controlled clinical trial data, systematic outcome analysis, or independent verification of the clinical claims discussed during the meeting.

Accordingly, its purpose is descriptive: to document the principal scientific, clinical, and intellectual themes emphasized by the symposium, and to place those themes within a broader discussion of acupuncture, systems medicine, and integrative medical thought.

CONCLUSIONS

The Inaugural International Symposium on Acu-Reflex Point Acupuncture represented more than a ceremonial recognition of one physician's career. It also became an occasion to reflect upon the ongoing evolution of acupuncture medicine and on the productive tension between inheritance and innovation.

In his closing remarks, Dr. Changzhen Gong, President of the American Academy of Traditional Chinese Medicine, noted that the nine generations of the ARPA Heritage Program represent not simply the continuation of a therapeutic technique, but the continuation of a mode of clinical thinking that remains adaptable precisely because it is not rigid.

What was presented as being transmitted through this lineage was therefore not only a therapeutic method, but also a scientific and clinical spirit: one that respects tradition without being confined by it, embraces innovation without severing its roots, and continues to seek understanding through observation, practice, and inquiry.

Against the background of systems medicine, neuromodulation, and the emerging role of artificial intelligence, Acu-Reflex Point Acupuncture was presented at the symposium as moving toward a more open and integrative future. By emphasizing dynamic body-surface reflections, individualized treatment, and systemic regulation, it was portrayed as one possible bridge between classical acupuncture and contemporary science.

REFERENCES

1. English Cohort Chart of Jin's ARPA Heritage Program (2015–2025), ARPA.

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