

# NEWSLETTER

August 2018



## 2018/19 MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The new Committee was elected at the AGM on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2018. The Committee members are listed on the TCAA Website <http://www.taichiaustralia.com>.

## CHANGE TO FOCUS OF THE TCAA NEWSLETTER

It has been a challenge to have a regular newsletter issue for quite a few years. One of the functions that suffers is the broadcasting of upcoming events, whether organised by the TCAA or by individual members; announcements are usually overtaken by time.

With the convenience of the internet these days, it is decided to refocus as follows:

- a. The Newsletter will focus on publishing member articles and opinions when enough material is received.
- b. Upcoming events will instead be posted on the TCAA Website. Some postings will require a donation to the TCAA to be broadcasted. See details at the end of this Newsletter.

Details about postings will also be put on the Website at: <http://www.taichiaustralia.com/members.html>.

## 2018 TCAA OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS

Another successful and enjoyable Tai Chi championship, thanks to the many helpers, officials and enthusiastic participants and spectators. It was held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June in the Sydney University Sport and Aquatic Centre, New South Wales. Events available were Bare Hands TaoLu, Apparatus TaoLu and Push Hands.

The purpose of the Competition is to promote the spread and enjoyment of Tai Chi. It is aimed at bringing many Tai Chi practitioners and learners together to support each other in friendly competition and to learn from each other. This we achieved, judging by the many positive comments from competitors, officials and spectators alike.

There were altogether 70 individual participants, of which 30 were women. The youngest participant was 17 years old and the oldest were over 60. 25 participants took part in the Push Hands. We aim for another successful event on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2019, same place!



Bare Hands



One of the teams



Spear



Push Hands

## BREATH AND CHI .... by Robert Russell-Brown

Over my 26 years of practising Tai Chi I have often pondered the connection between breath and Chi. As an engineer I have had my doubts about the metaphysical explanations that the Chinese make. The following contains information that I have gleaned from years of reading the biology articles in that excellent magazine New Scientist. I am not a biologist so I have drawn my own conclusions as to the possible linkage. The explanations are a brief overview and more detailed information can be obtained from proper biology sources.

Science has now discovered two mechanisms that link proper breathing with improved health and longevity:

- a. **Breathing - Stress reduction - Telomeres - Health.** It has been shown that slow, measured breathing reduces stress, resulting in a healthier, longer life. An examination of cell replication reveals how this could work. A chromosome is a structure in all living cells that consists of a single molecule of DNA bonded to various proteins that carry the genes determining heredity. In all eukaryotic cells the chromosomes occur as threadlike strands in the nucleus of the cell. Chromosomes have telomeres at each end, to protect the chromosomes from deterioration. As the cells divide, some telomeres are lost. Eventually the shortening of the telomeres causes faulty cell division, leading to cell death and subsequent medical problems. It has also been shown that reducing stress inhibits the shortening of telomeres, hence the connection between slow, measured breathing and improved health.
- b. **Breath – Oxygen - ATP – Energy.** The body requires energy to enable the functioning of nerves, muscles and the brain. Scientists have determined that this energy comes from the mitochondrial process which produces Adenosine Triphosphate (ATP). ATP is a nucleotide that is the primary source of energy in all living cells. Its function is to donate a phosphate group during biochemical activities. Every cell in our body contains numerous mitochondria, making up to 10% of our body weight. The mitochondria take nutrients and oxygen from the blood then, through a complex series of reactions, produce ATP.

In conclusion, proper breathing reduces faulty cell division and, by increasing the amount of oxygen in the blood, assists in increased production of ATP energy - Chi, and consequently a healthier person.

### TCAA NSW INAUGURAL "TAI CHI CULTURAL MOON FESTIVAL"

TCAA NSW has organised its inaugural "Tai Chi Cultural Moon Festival" on Sunday the **30th September 2018** at Redfern Town Hall, starting at 9.00am finishing at 12.00 noon.

It will be open to all members and fellow practitioners to get together on the day to share their Tai Chi and Qigong forms and demonstrate to the general public who will be encouraged to join in.

We are hoping to make this an annual event to help promote Tai Chi and Qigong to the wider community.

Cyril Loa has kindly offered to put together a program for the day. Members wishing and able to contribute on the day please provide the following information:

1. Your name/school, and contact details.
2. What you are sharing:
  - a. Style of Tai Chi and a brief description of the demo.
  - b. Whether individual or group demo.
  - c. Whether suitable for public participation.

**NOTE that your total demo duration must be no longer than 10 minutes.**

You should bring your own music and media player. (TCAA will have the karaoke microphone and speaker to amplify your player's sound if needed.)

Please email your bid to me at [heardsteve@gmail.com](mailto:heardsteve@gmail.com) for a time slot by **Sunday 16 September**, and Cyril will have the unenviable task of creating the schedule.

- From Steve Heard, NSW Rep

### AUSTRALIAN PARTICIPATION RATES IN TAI CHI CHUAN AND QIGONG: WHERE IS EVERYONE? .....by Brian Corless

In the March, 2017 edition of the Tai Chi Association of Australia newsletter I wrote about the benefits of Tai Chi chuan for mental health and commented on published survey data from the USA by Dr. Romy Lauche\* and colleagues (2016) which highlighted differences in U.S. participation rates between Yoga and Tai Chi. At the time I noted that similar rates on participation for Tai Chi in Australia were difficult to obtain as the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), in its Participation in Sport and Physical Activity report of 2012, grouped participation data for "Tai Chi" under the category of "Martial Arts" together with data for other martial arts such as kungfu, karate and taekwondo etc., whereas Yoga was given its own distinct category for participation data. My point was that it would be helpful for the Australian Tai Chi community to have easier access to this information so that we can assess where we are now and consider how to best promote Tai Chi's physical and mental health benefits into the future.



Recapping the results of Dr. Lauche and colleagues' (2016) paper, it was estimated from the 2012 U.S. National Health Interview Survey of about 35,000 participants, that about 7 million people ( $\approx 3\%$ ) in the U.S., of a population of about 240 million, had practised Tai Chi at least once in their lifetime, and about 2.6 million ( $\approx 1\%$ ) had done so in the previous 12 months. The estimate of people who had practiced Tai Chi in the previous 12 months in 2012, showed only a slight increase ( $\approx 100,000$  participants) from the estimate of 2002, compared to the larger increase for the 12-month participation rate for Yoga which rose from an estimated 10 million in 2002 to 21 million in 2012 (an increase of  $\approx 11$  million participants). The authors suggested that a more aggressive marketing approach to publicly promoting Yoga in the U.S. was a possible explanation for its success. The data also showed that compared to non-Tai Chi users, Tai Chi participants in the U.S. were more likely to be female and older than 30 years of age, and that younger age ranges were generally more represented in Yoga research studies, compared with older age ranges in Tai Chi research. Those interested in other characteristics of Tai Chi and Qigong users are referred to Dr. Lauche and colleagues' (2016) paper.

I am now pleased to say that two recent Australian research studies by Dr Ineke Vergeer\* and colleagues from the

University of Southern Queensland and Victoria University, Melbourne, go some way towards giving us a better idea of the “lay of the land” for Tai Chi participation in Australia. The first of these was published in mid-2017 and examined trends in the participation of two groups of “holistic movement practices” (HMPs) in Australia, specifically Tai Chi/Qigong and Yoga/Pilates over a 10-year period between 2001 and 2010, with a total of nearly 200,000 respondents surveyed over the 10 years.

Using data from the Australian Sports Commission Recreation and Sport Surveys (ERASS), which are independent national surveys conducted each year between 2001 and 2010, Dr Vergeer and colleagues reported that in the 12 months prior to each yearly survey, over this 10-year period, an average of 0.6% of respondents (range 0.5% to 0.7% across the decade) said that they had engaged in Tai Chi/Qigong activities and an average of 3% (range 1.5% to 3.5%) said that they had engaged in Yoga/Pilates activities. From 2001 to 2010, a slight increase in participation in both groups was noted with 0.5% of respondents in 2001 stating that they engaged in Tai Chi/Qigong in the previous 12 months increasing to 0.6% of respondents in 2010, with a peak of 0.7% in 2008. For Yoga/Pilates, a slightly larger increase was reported with 1.5% in 2001 rising to a peak of 3.5% in 2010. From the data, Dr Vergeer and colleagues concluded that overall, 12-month participation rates for both groups remained relatively stable over this time.

Translating these percentages into precise numbers of people participating is difficult and it is common in statistical analysis to provide a range of numbers within which we are very confident that the true number of people participating will fall. So, based on estimates of the average Australian population over the period 2001 and 2010, Dr Vergeer estimated, with 95% confidence, that across the decade there would have been somewhere between 105,000 and 123,500 people participating in Tai Chi/Qigong activities on average each year. For 2010 alone, the estimated number participating in Tai Chi/Qigong would lie between 103,000 and 157,000. The ABS currently estimates that the Australian population is about 25 million, and on the basis of Dr Vergeer’s study, it is estimated that there will be between 127,000 and 149,000 people currently participating in Tai Chi/Qigong. Two simple questions that arise for me from this data are: where are they all and what are their characteristics?

In this first paper, Dr Vergeer’s research goes some way towards answering these questions. The authors reported that for each year of the decade surveyed, there were more females than males engaging in both category groups with almost 8 times higher odds of women participating in Yoga/Pilates than men and almost 5 times higher odds in Tai Chi/Qigong. Over time, age differences were also noted between the groups with a significant increase in the number of older Australians (over 55 years) participating in Yoga/Pilates over the 10-year period compared to Tai Chi/Qigong which surprisingly remained stable in numbers during that period. Despite this increase, more Tai Chi/Qigong practitioners were found in the older age range (over 55 years), however participation in Tai Chi/Qigong activities declined in younger (15-34 years) and middle (35-53 years) age ranges over the decade surveyed

Dr Vergeer and colleagues also examined data for “fitness-type” (e.g. aerobic and gym) activities over the same 10-year period and found a significant increase in participation rates for those activities compared to the relatively stable rates for Tai Chi/Qigong and Yoga/Pilates. They suggested that the public health message in the media during that period for the health benefits of increasing fitness activities yielded greater results for participation rates in those activities, compared to the low-key approach in the media for promoting mind-body, holistic activities, such as Tai Chi. Interestingly, as I mentioned earlier from Dr Lauche and colleagues (2016) results, the twofold increase in participation rates for Yoga in the US between 2002 (est. 10 million) and 2012 (est. 21 million) was attributed to an aggressive marketing campaign promoting the public health benefits of Yoga, whereas Tai Chi rates in Australia, with no major public health message, remained relatively stable over that period.

Dr Vergeer and colleagues’ (2017) study provides valuable information and more questions for the Australian Tai Chi community, given that relatively stable numbers participating in Tai Chi/Qigong over the decade 2001 to 2010, has coincided with a notable absence of any prominent public health message about Tai Chi’s well-documented physical and mental health benefits. In 2015, Yang and colleagues estimated that approximately 450 clinical research studies had been published world-wide demonstrating the health benefits of Tai Chi chuan in the period 1991 to 2013. Similarly, Husten & McFarlane in 2016 published a review of the health benefits of Tai Chi including “Excellent” and “Good” levels of evidence supporting Tai Chi for a range of physical and mental health issues.

In contrast, a more prominent public health message over the decade about fitness-related activities (walking, gym, etc.) coincided with a significant increase in participation rates in those activities. Questions also arise about how to best engage younger and middle-aged people, and others with chronic health conditions, in practising Tai Chi also given the number of research studies that have reported significant health benefits for these specific groups.

In a second study published this year, Dr Vergeer and colleagues (2018) followed-up their earlier results by further examining the characteristics of users of HMPs, such as Tai Chi, compared with those who were physically active and using other activities (e.g. walking, running, gym etc.), and specific characteristics of the Yoga/Pilates and Tai Chi/Qigong groups.

The authors noted several differences in the characteristics of HMP-users (Yoga/Pilates and Tai Chi/Qigong combined) when compared with physically active, non-HMP users, and that overall the HMP group were more likely to be female, above the age of 34, have a higher level of education, a higher socioeconomic status and fewer children at home, and participate more often in a greater range of physical activities. These findings, particularly for female predominance in HMPs, are similar to the results of other HMP studies overseas, particularly for Yoga. Similar also to the overseas experience was the result that in Australia younger age ranges were more represented in Yoga/Pilates activities whereas older age ranges were more likely to be engaging in Tai Chi/Qigong activities.

Interestingly, although female participation was predominant in both HMP groups, there was a higher proportion of males participating in Tai Chi/Qigong, compared to Yoga/Pilates. The authors suggest that the history and martial aspects of Tai Chi may make it a more appealing exercise for men.

Taken together, these studies provide a much clearer picture of the Tai Chi landscape in Australia. While sharpening our focus towards the question of who participates in Tai Chi in Australia, Dr Vergeer and colleagues also present us with questions about how the Australian Tai Chi community, its representative bodies, governments and commercial interests can better deliver the public health message about Tai Chi and overcome the barriers to participating, such as improving access to classes for regional areas, those with chronic health conditions and younger age groups.

Those of us old enough to remember the “Life Be In It” media campaigns of the 1970s and 1980s, will recall “Norm the Couch Potato” slothfully laying around and sipping his chai tea (or was that a few beers?). Anyway, although some Australians were more than happy to embrace Norm’s behaviours, for most of us that public health message coincided with a large increase in the number of people exercising and more opportunities to participate in exercise. So, a question for us all to ponder: How can the Tai Chi community in Australia better engage with the public to promote Tai Chi’s public health message. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please email me at (bcorless@shoalhaven.net.au).

Speaking for myself, I know that I would much rather have Tai Chi than chai tea any day.

*Brian Corless, is a (recently retired) Clinical Psychologist and now full-time Tai Chi practitioner on the south coast of NSW. He trains in Tai Yi Taijiquan with Sifu Wang Yunkuo in Sydney*

*\*Thanks to Dr Vergeer and Dr Lauche for their suggestions and reviews of this article.*

### **SWORD EXEMPTION RULES, VICTORIA**

#### **(Reminder)**

Members are reminded that the only sure way to have the exemption is to submit the Exemption Application Form and the prescribed Statutory Declaration Form from the TCAA website <http://www.taichiaustralia.com/swords.html>. Without an exemption based on the Statutory Declaration, the exemption is incomplete, and TCAA will not be able to assist you if the Victorian Police questions your claim to exemption based only on your membership of the TCAA.

### **WEBSITE TIPS**

#### **(Reminder)**

If you find that you are not seeing on a website what you expect to see, it may be that your browser (eg Internet Explorer) needs to be told to “REFRESH”. What sometimes happens is that your browser keeps a webpage that you browse in a “cache” on **your** own computer. Every time you go to that website, it only goes to the “cache” stored before and does not go the current website as it is NOW. Therefore you will not see any changes that have been made since your “cache” was made.

So, PLEASE, when you go any website you may have gone to before, always REFRESH by clicking on the little circle with an arrow head (see the red arrow pointing to it below). It is usually at the top of your webpage on the same line as your URL line. Ken



### **LETTER FROM SIFU BRIAN GREGSON, TAMWORTH, NSW**

I have been teaching Tai Chi and Qigong in regional NSW since late 1989 and am very pleased with my accomplishments in the following years. I have reached a few milestones and would like to share these achievements with fellow members.

Apart from teaching standard forms, I also developed and taught forms of my own, including a 42 form Yang/Chen style form (and a shorter version of this), a Qigong ‘sequence’, sword form, fan form and more recently a 40 form Tai Chi/Qigong ‘medley’, a combination of flowing movements to emphasise the connection between Qigong and Tai Chi skills. For example, commencing form is Tai Chi, Painting a rainbow is Qigong. This new form gives my more senior students a better appreciation of flow, connecting movements and breathing techniques.

I am very interested in sharing this knowledge with fellow members and would welcome contact, and perhaps meeting fellow teachers (and students) to experience this new form. I suggest our Association could organise some dates and venues for fellow teachers to practice and share skills and experiences.

My contact is 0423 403 529 or email: [bjpublishing@bigpond.com](mailto:bjpublishing@bigpond.com)

Brian Gregson 23/7/18

## INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL TAI CHI AND QIGONG ASSOCIATION

In a recent review of 22 published research studies for Tai Chi and Qigong (TCQ) for cancer survivors (Wayne et al., 2018), TCQ showed promising results for helping people manage cancer-related symptoms and improve the quality-of-life of cancer survivors.

At present, in the West, there are no accredited standards requirements for Tai Chi or Qigong instructors to work in medical settings with cancer survivors. China already has an integrated medical mind-body model where traditional and modern medicine work hand-in-hand. Professor Byongsang Oh from Sydney University has joined with other international colleagues to form the International Medical Tai Chi and Qigong Association (iMTQA).

The iMTQA aims to establish accreditation guidelines and provide additional support for Tai Chi and Qigong instructors to instruct in Western hospitals, health services and communities so that patients, health professionals, governments and the general public can feel confident that an accredited iMTQA instructor has demonstrated that they have a required level of knowledge and skills to work in medical settings. iMTQA aims help TCQ instructors to be better able to work with a range of patients (e.g. with cancer, respiratory diseases, cardiac problems, mental health etc.) and community members, to improve the health and quality-of-life for all.

Some experienced and medical qualified TCQ instructors and masters will already have sufficient levels of knowledge, skills and expertise to work in medical settings, and accreditation will likely be straightforward. For newcomers to TCQ and those wanting to upgrade their knowledge and make a contribution to patients' better health outcomes, iMTQA can provide support and information on pathways towards these goals.

The inaugural iMTQA Conference in Boston USA is on 5th and 6th October, 2018 with the theme "FROM ANCIENT ART TO MODERN MIND-BODY MEDICINE" at which Professor Byeongsang Oh is a keynote speaker. More information on the iMTQA website under development at [www.imtqa.org](http://www.imtqa.org).

*Editor's Note: Brian Corless sent me the info. I have also been consulted by Prof Oh. This is a development that TCAA will follow. What they decide on the medical qualifications, we may not be able to prescribe, but we can advise what is practical. Ken Goh*

## BRISBANE INTERNATIONAL CHINESE MARTIAL ARTS CHAMPIONSHIPS (BICMAC) 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> November

The Brisbane International Chinese Martial Arts Championships (BICMAC) is being held from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> November 2018. On show will be movie stars, Shaolin monks, seminars, Taolu, Sanda and Tai Chi Push Hands competitions, and gala nights. Included are Para Athlete divisions.

The event will feature Hong Kong Movie Star and Hung Gar Grandmaster Chiu Chi Ling from legendary films as *Kung Fu Hustle (The Tailor)* and Jackie Chan's classic *Snake in the Eagles Shadow* conducting a seminar, and hosting an exclusive private dinner.

For more information, follow: <https://www.facebook.com/Brisbane-International-Chinese-Martial-Arts-Championships-1721972164738950/>

## **EDITOR'S NOTES: SUBMITTING ARTICLES**

Besides informing the membership about matters from the Management Committee, this Newsletter is also a members' forum for learning/teaching ideas.

Members are invited to send in articles. Articles should be first-hand observations and conclusions/opinions. Should you need to quote published material or the opinion of others, you should identify the source (a hyperlink if available), and provide your summary of the subject matter as relevant to your article.

Providing to TCAA your article implies permission given to the TCAA to publish. Others may use the information in the articles without necessarily acknowledging you as the originator. As you may know, copyright is not related to an idea but to the "specific expression (embodiment)" of ideas or concepts, meaning your composition that is an original weaving together an implementation of ideas and sequences. (TCAA disclaims providing legal advice.)

The Editor reserves the right to make changes to comply with our Code of Conduct and space considerations. Please submit your article(s) to [tcaanews@gmail.com](mailto:tcaanews@gmail.com).

**EDITOR'S NOTES: SUBMITTING EVENTS FOR POSTING ON TCAA WEBSITE**

Members may send a short title and description of less than 70 characters about events they are organising. A hyperlink to further information should be included for the reader to get further information. TCAA organised or supported events will also be posted. Please submit your events to [tcaanews@gmail.com](mailto:tcaanews@gmail.com).

If the event is deemed by the Editor to be non-profit, this facility is provided FREE but limited to one event per member. No additional event may be posted until the existing one expires. Editor or Webmaster reserves the right to reduce content if necessary. If the event is deemed to be "for-profit", it will be posted upon a donation to the TCAA of \$50. If accepted, the posting will include an email notification to current members. Size of promotional material for email should not exceed one pdf A4 page.

Criteria of whether an event is for-profit or not-for-profit will be on the Website at:

<http://www.taichiaustralia.com/members.html>

This facility is not meant for a member's regular class advertising, which should be on the Website under "Find Instructors".

Editor's Note: Comments concerning this Newsletter only to [tcaanews@gmail.com](mailto:tcaanews@gmail.com)