

Health Perspectives and Lifestyle Issues of First-year Nursing Students: As Revealed Through a Seminar in Health Self-Management

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Purpose

The purpose of this study is to outline the educational strategies of the course “Seminar in Health Self-Management,” which is designed to improve the health perspectives of first-year nursing students, and assess how their health perspectives concerning their lifestyles and health issues changed after attending the course.

Methods

Course Description: The course “Seminar in Health Self-Management” was organized around several key elements, including 1) how to monitor one’s physical condition through *Ryodoraku* – an approach to acupuncture developed by Dr. Nakatani Yoshio and which employs a machine to measure the electric potential difference of meridians on the skin – and through 24-hour records of daily life that include such information as the time the person wakes up and goes to sleep, their diet, exercise, and health conditions involving symptoms or signs of discomfort on those days; 2) the value of traditional Japanese traditional food and its efficacy for our health; 3) the functions of our stomach and bowels, and how to select and cook natural food; 4) effective breathing and exercises and how to apply meridian yoga to adjust one’s health condition; 5) reflection on lifestyle and health conditions to clear up the students’ health issues.

Subjects and Instruments : Ten nursing students who attended the course were measured with *Ryodoraku* after every lecture, and submitted their daily life and health condition records for seven weeks. Aside from *Ryodoraku*, blood pressure, spirometry, weight, height, bone density, and subcutaneous fat were also measured in the classes.

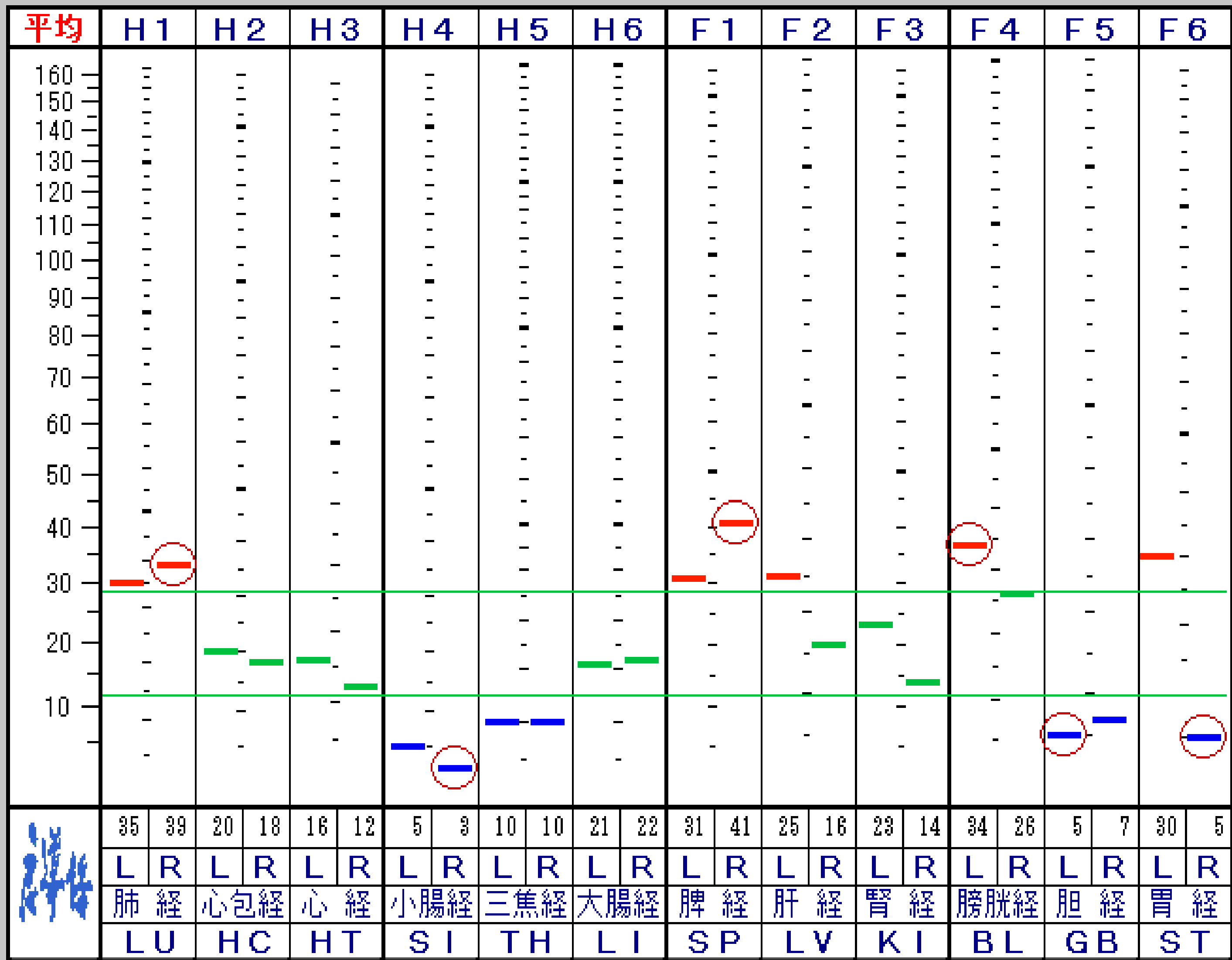
Analysis: Researchers analyzed the relationships between daily life patterns, health conditions, and the *Ryodoraku* results.

Results

The data shown in Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 was from a female student “A,” measured by *Ryodoraku*. Fig. 1 shows the measurements before she attended the course, whereas Fig. 2 shows those from afterwards. 90 percent of the students could identify the relationships between their lifestyles and health conditions. One example that illustrates the resulting change in health perspective is that of the female student A. A had two little children, of two and four years of age, and suffered from subjective symptoms such as sensitivity to cold and lower back pain. She related how she had been a conscientious flight attendant before being married, and had to do her best to ensure the safety of her passengers. Now simultaneously a mother and a college student, she continues to feel that she must do everything perfectly, despite this resulting in her often sleeping only three hours per night. From the daily life records, researchers realized that she had been taking care of her children and her college matters every day almost entirely without support from the rest of the family. She believed that she could sufficiently handle everything by herself. However, her *Ryodoraku* results revealed that her physical strength was lower than the average for women of the same age. She reflected upon this and noted that she would have to re-arrange her lifestyle, such as sleeping time and the content of meals. Her daily life records for the last two weeks showed that she went to bed before twelve o’clock at night and planned to enjoy outside activities on the weekend with her children. As A’s case illustrates, not only the daily lives of the students themselves but also those of their family members need to be arranged together.

Figure #1 – Ryodoraku Measurements

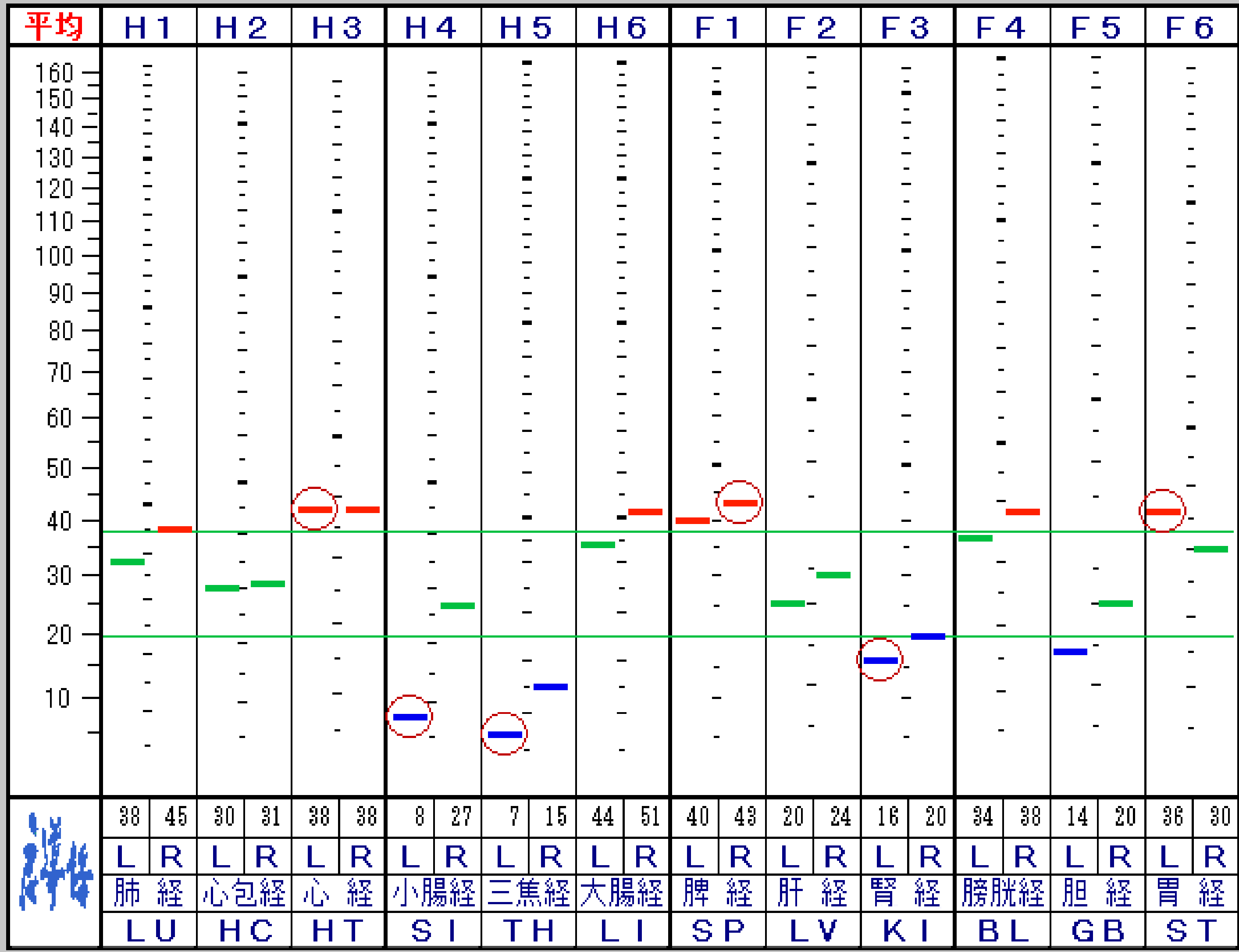
-Before Student A attended the course-



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Figure #2 – Ryodoraku Measurements

-After Student A attended the course-



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Fig. 2 shows that after student A attended the course her physical strength (green lines) became higher than before (Fig. 1)

Conclusions

A human being’s 60 billion cells get their energy from balanced meals, while their functions are influenced by the activity that makes up individual life styles. In offering these concepts and experiences, this course is useful for enabling students to reflect on their lifestyle and change their perspectives towards health.