The Art of Acupuncture
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I am a part time salaried GP, working at Bharani Medical Centre in Slough. I worked at Hillingdon UCC and often work as a locum in the Hillingdon Area. Also I worked at Wexham Park Hospital as a clinical assistant in rheumatology where I trained to do injections and acupuncture.
What I am going to talk about

- History of Acupuncture
- How it works
- Chinese and Western Theory
- The different types of Acupuncture
- Uses of Acupuncture
- Treatment
- Contraindication and side-effects
- Cost
Chinese Medicine

- Chinese Medicine is very old; dates back nearly 3,000 years.
- It was originally founded in the concept of yin-yang.
- In China, yin is considered feminine energy and yang is considered masculine energy.
Chinese medicine is believed to balance the energy in the body.

Their goal of each individual treatment is to increase or decrease the missing energy.
Chi

- Chi is translated into English as “life energy”
- Chinese medicine believes that good health is a balance of Chi.
- Chi flows through pathways called meridians.
Meridians

- Meridians are invisible lines where the chi flows
- Different meridians correspond with specific organs.
- The body has been mapped with them.
Meridians

The 12 Meridians
- Lung
- Large Intestine
- Stomach
- Spleen (Pancreas)
- Heart
- Small Intestine
- Bladder
- Kidney
- Heart Governor
- Triple Heater
- Gall Bladder
- Liver
Balanced

• Acupuncture is used to achieve balance in Chi.
• Acupuncture involves inserting thin needles on Meridians
• The needles are placed under the skin, in the epidermis.
Symptoms according to Chinese Medicine

- If you experience pain then it shows troubles in the energy flow of chi.
- Unlike Western Medicine, Chinese doctors connect unrelated symptoms.
Acupuncture according to Western Society

- Scientists have shown that acupuncture causes a release of naloxone and endorphins.
- They also cause the skin to be a electrical conductor.
Acupuncture mechanisms of action

- Conduction of electromagnetic signals
- Activation of opioids systems
- Changes in brain chemistry-release of neurotransmitters and neurohormones
Therapeutic Mechanisms of Acupuncture
Scientific Bases of Acupuncture

- Neurohumoral
- Morphogenetic
- Nerve reflex Theory
- The gate control theory of pain
- Endorphin
Neurohumoral Approach

• Peripheral nervous system to be crucial in mediating the acupuncture analgesia
• Meridian-Cortex-Viscera correlation hypothesis
Neurohumoral Approach (cont.)

- Acupoint-brain-organ
- Acupuncture stimulates to brain cortex and nerve system, ten controls the chemical or hormone release to the disordered organs
Morphogenetic Theory
Shang C. China 1989

- Acupuncture points are singular points in surface bioelectric field
- The role of electric field in growth control and morphogenesis
- Organizing centres have high electric conductance
- Acupuncture points originate from organizing centres
Nerve Reflex Theory

- Autonomic nervous system extending through internal organs
- Viscera-mutinous reflex
- Cutaneous -viscera reflex
- Acupuncture utilise these reflexes and restoring homeostasis of body and accelerate healing process
The Gate Control Theory

- Model for acupuncture pain relief
- Specific nerve fibres that transmit pain to the spinal cord (substantia gelatinous)
- Balance between stimulation and inhibitory fibres.
- Short term block pain by acupuncture (did not explain the prolong effect)
Endorphin Theory

- Natural morphine
- Acupuncture trigger the release of endorphin into the central nervous system
- Only deal with pain
- Corticoids and Substance also released along with endorphin
Japanese Acupuncture

- Locate point with the fingertips. Needles are thinner
- Needle techniques are more gentle
- Japanese acupuncture theory does not incorporate herbal medicine
- Training places greater emphasis on the practitioner developing the ability to locate points with the fingertips
Auricular Acupuncture

- Uses techniques of treating points exclusively to their the ear.
- This type of acupuncture is considered a complete medical system for treating disorders.
- Used to treat allergies and functional disorders
When Can Acupuncture be Useful?

- Pain (chronic, surgical, arthritic, malignant, headache, backache)
- Organic Lesions (cardiovascular, respiratory, GI, skin, urological)
- Neurological (peripheral and central)
- Substance abuse (drugs, nicotine, food and alcohol)
- Gynaecological disorders
- Psychiatric (depression and anxiety)
NICE Recommendations

- The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) provides guidelines to the NHS on use of treatments and care of patients. Currently, NICE recommends that acupuncture is considered as a treatment option for one condition: persistent lower back pain.
• Acupuncture is often used to treat musculoskeletal conditions (of the bones and muscles) and pain conditions, including:
  • headache and migraine
  • chronic pain, including neck and back pain
  • joint pain
  • dental pain
  • post-operative pain
• Some acupuncturists use acupuncture to treat a far wider range of conditions, including:
  • post-operative nausea and vomiting
  • allergies, including hay fever and eczema
  • fatigue
  • depression and anxiety
  • digestive disorders, including irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
  • infertility and menstrual disorders
  • insomnia
Physical Characteristics of the acupuncture point

- Points are corresponds to the high electrical conductance points on the body surface.
- High density of gap junctions at the epithelia fob the acupuncture points. Gap junctions are hexagonal proteins that facilitate intercellular communication and increase electric conductivity.
Contraindication and cautions

- The vast majority of contraindications for acupuncture are relative rather than absolute contraindications.
- Unexplained or undiagnosed medical or surgical conditions. In my mind, this is an absolute contraindication. Please never send your patient to an acupuncturist if you have not thoroughly investigated your patients’ problems, as this can delay or miss a medical diagnosis that can lead to dire consequences. A meticulous history, physical exam, and continuing observations and diligent follow-ups are always the best practice.
Contraindications and Cautions

- Sepsis and overwhelming infection although acupuncture has been implemented in situations of shock and resuscitation, at the present time, there is insufficient evidence to recommend routine use of acupuncture in a patient inflicted with overwhelming infection or sepsis. Resuscitation with fluids and antibiotics using our current critical care knowledge remains the mainstay of treatment.

- Unexplained and/or unstable syncope or seizure—these situations need to be addressed and stabilized with all modern medicine can offer before any acupuncture can be considered.
Contraindication and caution (cont.)

- Damaged heart valves and endocarditic although manually or electrically stimulated acupuncture needles are thought to have a bacteriostatic or even bactericidal effect, acupuncture needs to be used with extreme caution in a patient who is susceptible to endocarditic. Any disruption of the skin should also be avoided in severely neutropenic patients, as seen after myelosuppressive chemotherapy. Similarly, for patients who are severely immuno-compromised, it is best to avoid acupuncture therapy.

- Pacemaker or AICD (automatic implantable cardioverter-defibrillator) patients should avoid electroacupuncture or electrical stimulation (#4).
Contraindication and cautions

- Bleeding disorders and use of anticoagulants: these are not absolute contraindications, as acupuncture needles are nearly always thinner or much finer than the phlebotomy needles and intravenous catheters routinely administered to these patients in hospitals. However, the acupuncturist should always be notified regarding any bleeding risks.

- Pregnancy: this is not an absolute contraindication. Acupuncture has been studied extensively for gestational conditions such as breech presentations, pregnancy-associated nausea and labour pain. In fact, there are certain acupuncture points that are known to induce labour; thus, if your patient is pregnant, her acupuncturist should definitely be informed.

- Local contraindications of acupuncture include active infection, skin lesions, or malignancy at the insertion sites, since there is the risk of worsening the condition, such as spreading the infection, creating more inflammation, or causing the dispersal or metastatic tumour cells, respectively.
Treatment

- Each session is based on diagnosis
- Usually several different points are needled at each session
- The needles may be inserted for a few seconds or they may be left in for as long as 45 minutes
Possible Side Effects

- There could be a possibility of acupuncture needles causing mild bruising and bleeding due to penetrating through minute blood capillaries.

- One of the possible acupuncture side effects is the chance that patients might experience temporary drop in blood pressure levels or low blood pressure and fatigue. There are rare instances of patient fainting post acupuncture treatment.
Possible Acupuncture Points: Back and Feet Pain
Costs

- Initial session

- Follow-up sessions

- Number Of Sessions
  - Once and Twice a week for several weeks
Consent forms are on this website
Thanks for Listening

Acupuncture