

Demystifying Acupuncture

An Interview with Dr Qiu of Raleigh Acupuncture & Herbal Medicine

In recent years, we hear discussions about "acupuncture" quite often in public media as well as among coworkers and friends. However, for many of us, this ancient form of healing still carries a shade of mystery:

Does it work? Is it painful? What are the conditions that most suitable for acupuncture to treat? Why in this modern day of age we turn to this ancient practice? What is the relationship between acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine? How to choose an acupuncturist? ...

With the above questions, the *Best of Raleigh Durham* Magazine turned to Dr. Yijin Qiu, an expert practitioner of acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine for answers.

Here is a summary of a recent interview:

Acupuncture as a treatment method within the system of Traditional Chinese Medicine has a vast application. The World Health Organization has a list of over 40 conditions that may consider using acupuncture. Acupuncture is gaining popularity due to its effectiveness and lack of side effects. While the West is embracing acupuncture, there is a tendency of separating acupuncture with its root of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

When acupuncture becomes an independent treatment method, it reduces its effectiveness and the scope of application. Acupuncture is only a tool. It depends on the person who using it to make it effective. It takes at least five years to train a practitioner of Traditional Chinese Medicine. A fully trained acupuncturist needs about three years full time study. There are people practicing acupuncture has only 100 hours or less training. There must be a difference.

Many people afraid of trying acupuncture for the fear of pain. They associate needle puncturing experiences of vaccination, drawing blood for test, or accidentally being punctured by a sewing needle or a pin. The sensations of acupuncture are very different from those piecing pain experiences.

Acupuncture is typically painless. It may have a sense of heaviness, ache or tingling sensations. Many people feel very relaxed or even falling asleep during treatment. Even children can take acupuncture treatment very well.

The conditions mostly treated by acupuncture are:

1. Pain related issues such as lower back pain, shoulder pain, neck pain, including arthritis pain and various injuries;
2. Neurological issues such as headaches, muscle spasm, stroke rehabilitation;
3. Sinus congestion, allergy, common cold, sore throat, cough, asthma;
4. Indigestion, bloating, acid reflux, constipation, diarrhea, Crohn's Disease;
5. Insomnia, anxiety, depression, chronic fatigue, lack of concentration;
6. Gynecological conditions, menopause symptoms, infertility.

Acupuncture as a part of Traditional Chinese Medicine is a comprehensive health care system. It can treat a wide variety of health conditions. It is better to consult a qualified practitioner to determine the appropriateness of using acupuncture for a specific condition. Often times a practitioner of Traditional Chinese Medicine may combine other methods such as Chinese herbal medicine or Cupping in conjunction with acupuncture to enhance the effectiveness of treatment.

Many people wonder: how does acupuncture work? By inserting tiny needles to a few places in the body without delivering any medicine, what can be accomplished? Acupuncture works on the energy system of our body. We call this energy "Chi", which can be viewed as electrical system of our body. Needles placed at certain points can change the conductivity of the area thus promote the flow of this energy. This process can improve the communication between different parts of our body and stimulate systematic healing responses.

In this modern day of age, with so much advancement of science and technology, why do we turn to this ancient healthcare system of acupuncture or Traditional Chinese Medicine? Just like agricultural practices, many farmers are now in a process of turning toward organic and sustainable farming. Modern advancement has not been very helpful in maintaining ecological balance.

We are looking for organic foods to avoid too much chemicals such as pesticides or hormones in foods. The over use of antibiotics and other chemical drugs in modern medical practices create similar problems.

By placing too much focus on quick results and segregated field achievements, a broader view is lost. Life is not an independent mechanical process. It is organic. Traditional Chinese Medicine provides a comprehensive theoretical framework for the much needed organic medical practices. It promotes balance within our body and between our body and the environment. The result is sustainable health without side effects.

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