

Acupuncture 101

Seen through the eyes of today's society, Acupuncture is still a rather vague notion. Quite paradoxical, since it is one of the oldest recorded healing modalities. The simple awareness of its effectiveness, its well-established and well-deserved reputation as one of the main healing modalities in China and other countries, won't help you understand more about it. How about some facts to give you a better understanding of what acupuncture means?

Acupuncture has history that goes back at least 2500 years. Back then, stone needles were the only resources available. They were later exchanged for needles made of other interesting kinds of materials, such as bone and bamboo. Today, disposable stainless steel needles are used. We will stick to the stainless steel needles for now, no pun intended.



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*Without health,
there is no point.*

To anything.

~ Everett Mámor

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Needles might be a sensitive issue for some of you. Most people have no strong fear of needles, but the thought of sticking dozens of needles into the body might not appeal to many of us. This may be true until you come to realize that those needles are hair-thin, and most of the time, you can barely feel them. Above all, the benefits and the relaxation already felt during the treatment needs no further convincing. How bad can it be if many of my patients fall asleep during the 20 minutes of staying with the needles in?

How come some people fall asleep during the treatment? It is believed that there is a decrease in the delta and theta waves activity, resulting in sedation. No wonder acupuncture is so effective against insomnia, anxiety, and addictions.

Acupuncture points have originated from distress areas. What is it that we instinctively do when we experience pain? Apply pressure! From pressure point to acupuncture points, we now have over 1000 recorded acupuncture points with over 300 commonly used.

So how does acupuncture work? Well, for some people the empirical evidence spreading over thousands and thousands of years is more than enough. However, if scientific evidence works better for you, here are a few explanations.

One of the most common objective effects of acupuncture is the pain-relieving effect, which is achieved by raising the pain threshold and increasing the amount of endorphins released into the blood. Would you believe if you were told that acupuncture has been used for surgical anesthesia? It is true! Headaches, toothaches, backaches, and the like are nothing compared to surgery, wouldn't you say so?

Furthermore, acupuncture can increase the levels of dopamine and other neurotransmitters, which may affect many diseases such as Parkinson's.

People are awed when told that sometimes, similar point combinations are used to treat for instance: low and high blood pressure, or other antagonistic disorders, such as diarrhea and constipation. This happens because of the very important role of acupuncture in homeostasis effect. It regulates the internal environment to reach the desirable state of balance. It does so by acting on the nervous and the endocrine system, having a strong action in normalizing the functions of our body.

By enhancing our immune system we cannot go wrong. Acupuncture excels here as well! We could call acupuncture our long-term safe antibiotic, as it can potentially be used for infections. However, the best approach is prevention, and by having acupuncture treatments one will have an increased number of white blood cells to block all the potential infections.

One of the most important effects of acupuncture is that it can tremendously speed up the recovery process in patients with paralysis due to stroke or other causes. How amazing is that? When many therapies tend to fail in these cases, acupuncture works! How does it do that? By stimulating certain cells from the spinal cord and cranial equivalents. Does that mean that the acupuncture needles will be inserted somewhere around the spinal cord? Not exactly so; rather scalp acupuncture is highly effective for these kinds of treatments.

Extensive research is being conducted at the moment and we could take each of the above explanations in turn and fill books and books with more details. The bottom line is that acupuncture works. And if it is not for the fact that it has been the main modality for literally billions and billions of Chinese or that there is plenty of scientific research that shows its benefits, how about you try acupuncture for yourself? I bet you won't be disappointed!

Reference: Jayasuriya, A. (2006). Clinical Acupuncture. India: B. Jain Publishers Ltd.

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