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This month in the news..

National TCM week is this month occurring the 17th of August through to the 23rd of August. The purpose of the week is to raise awareness of TCM in all forms.

The event being organised by the Endeavour College of Natural Medicine asks all practitioners, schools and organisations to promote the benefits of TCM by organising special offers, displays and promotions. The week is supported by professional industry associations AACMA, ANTA & ATMS.



How does equine acupuncture work? By Allan Moffatt

An acupuncturist talks about his experiences and gives some explanation on how acupuncture works with horses. It does not work via nerves or some physical chemical response. Here is the best way I know to explain how it works.

Consider your house. Flowing through it is air. You cannot see it but you can feel it and you certainly know when it is not there.

Within the body are also flowing airs. As you breath you are making them also 'breath" and flow. You cannot see them. You cannot cut them and you cannot find them in a dead body. As they flow they irrigate the parts of the physical body that they flow by and have also a effect on

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the blood flow. They are the intelligence of the body, 'body intelligence'. These airs are what is called chi, meaning Life or life-force. Acupuncture has mapped these airs in detail and learned how to make use of them.

Back to our house example. If you lock the doors and windows and go away for a week or two when you return it is very stuffy . This is like an illness in the body. Clearing the illness is akin to opening the doors and windows in the house to make the airs flow again.

The Art of acupuncture is knowing exactly which of the doors or windows to open to get the result desired in the minimum time.

These doors and windows in the body are called the **points** of acupuncture and each has its own particular qualities and effects and 'rooms' of influence, to allow airs to flow.

Continuing on from our explanation of how acupuncture works.

Explaining five elements as airs

A house is aligned to the four directions of the compass. The body is aligned to the five elements. They are earth, water, wood, fire , metal.

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Every single part of the body has to be breathing to keep the five elements in balance.

There is a breathing that occurs through the points of acupuncture and some points are more aligned to one element than to another. For example if a point is more aligned towards fire it is called a fire point.

With the house imagine that in the air there are not one but five different types of air flowing in order to keep the balance. Each has a different temperature, moisture, speed, viscosity and weight.

And the airs can flow in and out at each door, or window. What we are trying to achieve is the right balance within the house to maintain optimal comfort and that all rooms are served.

In the body the rooms are the channels (meridians) and the doors (and windows) are the points and we want it all to work responsively. The doors are opening and closing when necessary, to adjust the conditions and the equilibrium in the body, without our conscious intervention.

Sometimes the air from one window will adversely interact with the air from another window. This is called the destructive cycle. At other times one will support the other and this is called the creative cycle. In this case one door opening will support the next to open and its air will flow etc.

What is called the 'da chi' sensation is akin to feeling the flow of air in your body just like feeling the flow of air in your home. In your house sometimes you may moisten your fingers and put it up and this will help you feel it. The sense for the 'da chi' feeling must come through the fingers. Then you can develop a sense for how the Life forces are moving and interacting within the body.

Sometimes a fan may be used to help the air flow. It does not neces-

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sarily have to be on full. One adjusts the rate in order get the best effect with the minimum intervention. Using the fan is akin to doing tonification and sedation with the needles. After getting the da chi sensation one turns the needles either clockwise or anti clockwise to make the chi flow in the desired direction for the desired result. One learns to feel when one has success and when to stop turning.

As far as point location goes I say my fingers have little eyes in them and they are attuned to see the points. Also my fingers are alive and an energy flows from them constantly. When my fingers run over an area they feel the change in resistance to chi flow from my fingers into the client body. This is much like the change in resistance to electrical flow. This allows me to have accurate point location skills.

Doing healing is like making sure the necessary windows will stay open. You may have to go and open them again later. Sometimes effects last only three days sometimes seven days and sometimes more permanent.

Now with the house one has to consider the changes brought on by the seasons and make the adjustments in the doors and windows accordingly. So in winter there will be less windows open and in summer more. In treatment one seriously has to consider the seasonal influences.

As the seasons change there is a period of 12 days in between them when it is useful to clear out the effects of the previous season and prepare for the next season. So one has spring cleaning.

Another influence to consider in your house is the effects of light. This can be altered via the curtains. The 'seasons' of the light are via the equinoxes and solstices. So that at winter solstice (June 21 in southern hemisphere and Dec 21 in northern hemisphere) the light begins to increase and at this time the horse begins to lose coat even

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though it is not midwinter for 1 more month. This shows how closely the horse is connected to the sun as a solar being. Horse does not like to be inside for long.

Five Elements Cycles



Further to the Acupuncture explanation in terms of the house.
Re; five elements

We can imagine at the centre of the house a hearth, a star chamber, our five elements source. Here the Life-force the soul of the house can pull in the five energies and redistribute them as required to the various rooms and hence out via the doors and windows to the atmosphere. Thus you see a breathing occurring from within outwards and then from the outwards coming back in. The house and the environment are connected. Similarly we are breathing and our spirit heart is our five elements source. We are breathing in and we breathe out through our skin, through our acupuncture points. How does that sound ?

Allan Moffatt B. Sc. B. Acup. www.horse-acupuncture.com

Events Calendar for August 2009

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Stones Corner - Introduction to 5 Element Acupuncture

9am - 5pm, Aust Institute of Applied Sciences

Contact: Gye Bennetts on (02) 94404194 or
courses@5element.com.au

This is a multi-day event ending on the 09/08

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Melbourne - An Intro to 5 Element Acupuncture

9am - 5pm, Endeavour College of Natural Medicine

Contact: Gye Bennetts on (02) 94404194 or
courses@5element.com.au

This is a multi-day event ending on the 23/08

“Maybe I made up the whole thing”: Placebos and patients experience in a randomized controlled trial.



Patients in the placebo arms of randomized controlled trials (RCT) often experience positive changes from baseline. While multiple theories concerning such "placebo effects" exist, peculiarly, none has been informed by actual interviews of patients undergoing placebo treatment.

Here, we report on a qualitative study (n = 27) embedded within a RCT (n = 262) in patients with irritable bowel syndrome. Besides identical placebo acupuncture treatment in the RCT, the qualitative study patients also received an additional set of interviews at the beginning, midpoint, and end of the trial. Interviews of the 12 qualitative subjects who underwent and completed placebo treatment were transcribed.

We found that patients (1) were persistently concerned with whether they were receiving placebo or genuine treatment; (2) almost never endorsed "expectation" of improvement but spoke of "hope" instead and frequently reported despair; (3) almost all reported improvement ranging from dramatic psychosocial changes to unambiguous, progressive symptom improvement to tentative impressions of benefit; and (4) often worried whether their improvement was due to normal fluctuations or placebo effects.

The placebo treatment was a problematic perturbation that provided an opportunity to reconstruct the experiences of the fluctuations of their illness and how it disrupted their everyday life. Immersion in this RCT was a co-mingling of enactment, embodiment and interpretation involving ritual performance and evocative symbols, shifts in bodily sensations, symptoms, mood, daily life behaviors, and social interactions, all accompanied by self-scrutiny and re-appraisal.

The placebo effect involved a spectrum of factors and any single theory of placebo--e.g. expectancy, hope, conditioning, anxiety reduction, report bias, symbolic work, narrative and embodiment--provides an inadequate model to explain its salubrious benefits.

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