



Newsletter

11 August 2014

Dear Members,

We hope that you are all having a busy and happy summer. We would like you to take some time to read this newsletter that will keep you up to date with CPD courses, articles and some special offers that we have acquired for you recently.

Regarding **CPD courses**, both **Dr Trevor Wing and Stephen Birch** have agreed to come over to Ireland! This helps us to learn from great practitioners without the costly sum of travelling abroad to see them. To paraphrase the esteemed Barbara Kirschbaum "You only really learn Chinese Medicine through teaching not books." So, if you agree with that sentiment, these two lecturers are definitely not to be missed.

Happily, our **website** is now updated with the first section having gone live last month. Please check that your details are correct in the member's section and if they are not Mags will sort it out for you.

The second phase which is the member's section will go live in mid-September. All articles from members are still welcome and the next two areas we will be highlighting are 'Digestive Health' which goes live in September followed by 'Menopause' which will go live at the end of the year.

Our **AGM** will take place on **Sat 27/9/14** at the Sandymount Hotel Dublin4 at 3.30-5.30 after Dr Trevor Wing's lecture on 'The TCM Treatment of Gestation Disorders using Acupuncture and Chinese Herbal Medicine.' Please read on for further details.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Suzanne Cafferky

Chairperson

A Practitioner's insights into running a "Community Acupuncture practice"

At the height of the recession, as far back as 2011, I started one of the few Community Acupuncture Clinics now in Ireland. My motivation was the fact that fewer people were attending for my regular one to one clinic, and those who were attending, were constrained in their treatment process by how many treatments they could afford. So it was after a chat with a colleague / friend of mine, (you know who you are!), that the seed was planted, and I started to think of Community Acupuncture as a viable way to entice people in to my clinic, and for some, introduce them to Acupuncture for the first time.

For those of you who are new to the concept of Community Acupuncture, (or Multibed Clinics) it is basically Acupuncture which is carried out in a group setting, usually in one big room, and the practitioner can move quickly and efficiently from one patient to another, essentially the way it is done in China, for those of you who have been there. Usually, the assessment is carried out privately and speedily in a separate room, to maintain confidentiality. This means more people can be seen and treated, and therefore costs can be kept to a minimum..



Community was the way Acupuncture has always been done in China for centuries. There was one Doctor and he treated the whole community with Acupuncture and herbs for a paltry sum! Somehow when Acupuncture migrated to the West, it fell into the clutches of exclusivity, so that even now, there is a whole section of the populace who see themselves as being excluded from receiving this wonderful medicine! Of course there is The Medical Card system, and this is enough for large sections of the population, but in my experience, there are a lot of people who always wanted to try Acupuncture, but never thought they could afford it. But with Community Acupuncture they now can!

The aim of Community Acupuncture is to make Acupuncture affordable and accessible to everyone! It divides the issues of money and treatment, so that people can afford to get well by coming for treatment as often as they need to, and then to stay well .

Some clinics charge a sliding scale rate, so that the patient pays what he / she can afford, from a minimum €10 up to a maximum €50 or €60 (whatever their normal rate would be). In my clinic I decided to go with a flat rate of €20 per person, and this seems to work very well.

My Community Clinic only runs every Friday. The rest of the week is given to one to one treatments usually fertility patients or new people who may need assessment for access to the Community Clinic. In my clinic I decided not to include fertility issues, simply because of the time involved in assessing and treating them, and it can be such an emotive issue anyway! Plus, people undergoing fertility treatments tend to want privacy, (even though nobody would know why they were there anyway!) Sometimes other people want the one to one treatment, and opt not to go into the Community Clinic, and that's fine also. If my Community Clinic patients need more than one treatment in a week, I offer them a lower cost treatment on a one to one basis. It keeps cost to a minimum for them, but I'm still covering my costs also.

In general, the type of patient most frequently seen in my Community Clinic, is the patient suffering musculo skeletal pain, sports injury, stress, insomnia, migraine, digestive issues etc. Some of these may have been seen on a one to one basis first, before following up in the Community Clinic.

For the clinic to be effective, the practitioner needs to be skilled at assessing and treating quickly. Dr Tans Balance method is used quite extensively in the Community setting, as the assessment technique is really fast, the patient does not have to undress, and in most cases can be treated sitting in a chair, which frees up a bed for someone else who needs it. In fact Dr Tan is a big advocate of Community Acupuncture, and offers discounts for his courses to those who are members of ACMAC (Association of Community and Multibed Clinics). In my Clinic, I have 4 beds and 2 comfy armchairs. I am lucky enough to have space in my clinic to do this, but if you are thinking of starting a Community Clinic, you may need to find a room to suit your needs outside of your current working area.

Most people who attend my Community Clinic are initially struck by the sense of "peace" in the room. If they are new, I always explain to them what to expect, and reinforce that nobody is looking at them or indeed anyone else! In fact it is absolutely the reverse! Everyone is so in tune with their own healing, that they don't even hear the movement of people coming or going. If the Clinic was empty when they arrived and full when they leave, this is a source of great amusement to them! "Gosh I didn't realise there were other people here!". I've heard this on more than one occasion! And the sense of healing in the room is almost tangible! I feel at peace as much as they do, and I definitely think the group dynamic of the sense of shared purpose, works almost like igniting a spark, which speeds up the healing process.

So if you think Community Acupuncture is for you, I'd say give it a go! Start by asking your current clients if it is something they would be interested in, and go from there! My practice has increased by at least 50% since I started it, and the word is definitely out about the wonders of Acupuncture. It is hard work certainly, but oh so rewarding!

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COURSE

TCM Clinical Gynaecology & Obstetrics Post Graduate Diploma Course in 2015

With Dr. Trevor Wing MBRCP FRCHM MBAC
Founder of The Women's Natural Health Practice

Eight Day Weekend Course
March 27th/28th + April 24th/25th + May 29th/30th + June 26th/27th + Optional exam on June 28th

DATES

AUDIENCE

- For qualified TCM and Chinese Herbal Medicine practitioners who wish to specialise in gynaecology and obstetrics

TOPICS

- Theory and diagnosis refresher • Professional BBT charting
- Common gynaecology diseases • Infertility • Gestational disorders
- Postpartum disorders • Covers both TCM and Biomedicine
- Focused on successful clinical outcomes

VENUE Richmond, Surrey, UK
(Easy access from London Heathrow Airport)

BOOKING Places are limited – book early
For further information, registration, prices, payment details and location please go to www.nextstepmedicine.com

"The most clear, concise, well explained TCM course I have ever attended, it has boosted my knowledge and my confidence in diagnosis. Plus provided me with a specialised area within which I have now achieved excellent clinical results."
Katherine Dandridge
London UK

Continued Professional Education



A Workshop on Shonishin: Japanese Acupuncture for Children



**May 22-24, 2015 (Friday/Saturday
10.00-17.00 + Sunday 10.00-16.00)
Instructor: Stephen Birch
PhD, LicAc (USA), MBAcC (UK), lid NVA
(Holland)**

Shonishin (children's needle therapy) is a unique and specialized pediatric style of acupuncture that developed over 250 years ago in Japan. It recognizes the fact that children do not like needles and has instead developed specialized treatment techniques, many of which are non-invasive and thus not frightening to the child. In ancient China, when acupuncture was first being described, nine kinds of needles were described, several of which had rounded ends, that are rubbed or pressed on the skin instead of inserted into the body. In Shonishin, following these ideas, a variety of instruments have been developed that can be pressed, rubbed, tapped or scraped on the skin to give different kinds of gentle stimulation. When applied for short periods of time in simple systematic patterns, these simple treatment techniques have been found effective for a wide variety of pediatric problems from birth through age five or so. As children get older, and/or their problems are more difficult or stubborn, specialized acupuncture techniques and insertion methods have also been developed and tailored to match the needs of children, so that they are comfortable and not aversive for the child or parent.

The general treatment can be very useful for fortifying the child's vital energy and strengthening their constitution. When correctly applied, this treatment will not only help symptoms to naturally improve, but will give a greater sense of well-being and help resolve many other small day to day problems, helping make the child less prone to illness. The basic treatment has the added advantage of being easily taught to parents so that they can use it regularly at home, thus increasing frequency of treatment and allowing parents to participate actively in the treatment of their children. This tends to reinforce the effects of treatment, and helps make the treatment more enjoyable for everyone. This style of pediatric acupuncture can be used by any acupuncturist regardless of general style of practice. In addition to the basic root treatment, a simplified form of Keiraku Chiryō (Japanese) 'Meridian Therapy' will be taught as a second root treatment system using non-invasive methods. In order to target symptoms, very light needling, moxa and other light, painless treatment methods will be taught.

Shonishin is used to treat a wide variety of problems using these specialized approaches. The following list includes the most commonly treated conditions: irritability, impatience, excessive crying at night in infants; hyperactivity; attention problems in small and school age children; dream disturbed sleep; indigestion; diarrhea; constipation; allergies; chronic stuffy or runny nose (from repeated colds and/or allergies); asthma (including allergic asthma, exercise induced asthma); weakened immune system - the child that catches cold frequently or has recurrent viral infections; bedwetting; stammering or stuttering; weak constitution, including infants with inadequate weight gain, frail children that are not as active as others; rashes, for example nettle rashes; urticaria; eczema; hernia; ear infections, usually chronic and repetitive; neurological problems resulting for example from cerebral palsy.

Stephen Birch is an international expert on Japanese acupuncture and author of the book 'Shonishin' published in 2011 by Thieme Medical Publishers.

Friday, May 22, 2015: (10.00-17.00)

10.00 – 10.10	Introduction
10.10 – 10.35	Overview of acupuncture in Japan
10.35 - 11.00	Overview of the history and development of shonishin
11.00 - 11.45	Treatment demonstrations
11.45 – 12.00	Tea/coffee break
12.00 - 13.00	Theoretical basis of shonishin & overview of the modern utilization of shonishin
	Overview pediatric treatments: physiology and sensitivities etc
	Diagnostic methods and assessments for younger children
13.00 – 14.15	lunch
14.15 – 15.00	Overview of the treatment tools
15.00 - 15.45	Practice using basic tools
15.45 – 16.00	tea/coffee break
16.00 - 17.00	Contraindications and precautions in the treatment of children, developing strategies for treating children, the whole body root treatment - tools and methods, instructing parents in home therapy

Saturday, May 23, 2015: (10.00 - 17.00)

10.00 -10.10	Questions & answers
10.10 - 11.30	Overview of root treatment patterns for older childrenJapanese approaches: meridian therapy treatments. Demonstration and practice of treatment techniques
11.30 - 11.45	Tea/coffee break
11.45 – 12.30	Treatment demonstrations
12.30 - 13.00	Cases
13.00 – 14.15	Lunch
14.15 – 15.00	Review and practice of shonishin tapping and stroking treatment techniques
15.00 – 15.45	Adjusting acupuncture treatment techniques for children: Inserting needles for children – lecture, demonstrations and practice
15.45 – 16.00	tea/coffee break
16.00 – 17.00	Okyu – Japanese moxa technique – lecture, demonstration and practice

Sunday, May 24, 2015: (10.00 - 16.00)

10.00 - 10.45	Treatment demonstrations
10.45 - 11.15	Adjusting acupuncture treatment techniques for children: Press-spheres, press-tack needles, intradermal needles – lecture, demonstration + practice
11.15 - 11.30	Tea break
11.30 - 12.15	cupping, jing-point bloodletting, - lecture, demonstrations + practice of all techniques
12.15 - 13.30	Lunch
13.30 - 14.45	Treatment of specific disorders
14.45 - 15.00	Tea break
15.00 - 15.50	Treatment of specific disorders
15.50 - 16.00	Questions and answers

Irritable Bowel Syndrome, Manageable with Acupuncture and Lifestyle.

IBS is a very common condition, between 10-20percent of people have IBS symptoms at some time. More than 80% of sufferers are women. IBS is seen as an umbrella or blanket diagnosis for symptoms which can be ill defined or changeable, but it can be described medically as over or underactive contractions of the large intestine, due to excessive parasympathetic stimulation.

Symptoms include pain, flatulence, bloating and sudden bouts of diarrhoea or constipation. Accompanying symptoms can be irritability, tiredness and poor appetite. Sufferers can feel generally wound up but also at times dragged down. There may be pain on the sides or spreading through the whole abdomen. Levels of pain may vary from a dull dragging ache to severe spastic pain.

PAIN MANAGEMENT

IBS has been treated with acupuncture for many years, and a study done in 2009 on symptom management of IBS using acupuncture and moxibustion showed that after a four week trial of 8 sessions, those receiving acupuncture had significant improvements in abdominal pain or discomfort as compared with the control group who showed minimal Improvement.

Those treated with acupuncture also showed improvement in gas, bloating and stool consistency. (1.)

WHAT IS THE ACUPUNCTURISTS VIEW OF IBS?

The Traditional Chinese Medical view of IBS is that the stressed liver is overacting on the Spleen and causing stagnation in the abdomen. The healthy liver is responsible for even flow of qi through the body, when it is not stressed the energy exchange process is smooth. A weak spleen/pancreas will be more easily disturbed and the process of assimilating food and transporting it to the colon will be disrupted.

In TCM the liver is the organ commonly affected by pressured lifestyle and especially by anger and frustration. While the stomach is weakened by dietary neglect, worry, overthinking, rushing or may be constitutionally delicate.

WHY DO SOME SUFFER MORE FROM DIARRHEA AND OTHERS FROM CONSTIPATION?

Interestingly where a patient suffers more from loose stools the TCM diagnosis is that a condition of weak spleen qi predominates. Conversely where constipation is dominant the diagnosis is that Liver qi stagnation is predominant.

A study published by the journal of gastroenterology found faster rates of gallbladder contractions in IBS patients with constipation predominant IBS, which bears out the TCM theory of liver/ gallbladder involvement. (2.)

WHY IS SEROTONIN SO IMPORTANT IN OVERALL BODY FUNCTION?

The alimentary canal or gut has its own separate enteric nervous system; roughly 95% of serotonin is made in the gut. Serotonin is one of the most important neurotransmitters for that system. Serotonin is important for the functions of the brain and digestive system. Mood, appetite memory and learning are all affected by serotonin levels.

Serotonin affects the motility of the bowel i.e.; the rate at which food moves through the system, it also affects mucous secretion in the intestines. Constipation dominant I.B.S sufferers have been shown to have decreased levels of serotonin and therefore less effective motility. Also low serotonin levels are associated with anxiety and depression.

Conversely, diarrhoea dominant sufferers have higher levels of serotonin activity leading to overactive bowels.

So there is much evidence suggesting that poor gut health leads to mood disorders and vice versa.

WHY DO IBS SUFFERER'S OFTEN HAVE FOOD INTOLERANCE?

In Chinese Medicine difficulty in digesting any food which is normally not harmful is put down to a deficiency of spleen/pancreas qi or "digestive fire" and again probably stagnation of liver qi.

This helps to explain why so many have problems with certain foods e.g.; grains esp. wheat, coffee, tea and citrus fruits. And interestingly, the diarrhoea predominant sufferer is usually more dairy intolerant, probably as TCM would have it because the spleen deficient person retains damp and so can't tolerate mucous forming foods.

These patients may benefit from doing an IgG food intolerance test. Acupuncture will strengthen digestion against these weaknesses and it may be best to avoid certain challenges. Eating low GI type fibre foods such as oats, brown rice, chia and flax seeds will speed up the processing of wastes and reduce infection and constipation.

HOW CAN ACUPUNCTURE HELP?

A study using acupuncture on the point Bladder 23 or "Shenshu" showed that "effective acupuncture increased and prolonged the activity of seretogenic neurons in the reward system pathway of the brain.....suggesting that acupuncture may be effective in the treatment of emotional disorders," (3)

Acupuncture works to relieve the symptoms of stress on the liver, gently rectify long term digestive or spleen deficiency, and improve motility in the abdomen. Points on the liver channel and general calming points are chosen which will address any long term repressed emotions such as resentment frustration. Also specific points are chosen which strengthen the stomach and spleen and reduce any dampness which is often present.

Points on the gallbladder channel are often chosen for IBS. Traditionally Chinese say a shy person has a "small gallbladder" Maybe there is a connection between this and recent findings that serotonin levels in animals are related to their social status.

This will give the patient more energy, reduce heavy sluggishness and reduce the tendency towards worry and anxiety. Relaxation therapies such as mindfulness, CBT and meditation are invaluable as this is a long term pattern requiring a long term approach and understanding of the root causes.

References;

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- Lee, O. Asian Motility studies in IBS journal of Neuro gastroenterology and Motility 210 -16: 120-13
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Crohn's Disease An Acupuncture Review

In discussing the acupuncture treatment of Crohn's disease, let's first have a brief review of this illness. Of prime importance- it has to be diagnosed, treated and followed up by tests on a regular basis, by the patient's medical family doctor and by a consultant specialist hospital doctor.

The illness was initially described by Crohn and colleagues in 1932.

An acupuncturist may have an important supportive role by helping to lessen the severity of the illness, using another approach and give more time to the patient in discussing their illness.

Acupuncture Treatments of Crohn's disease. The role of acupuncture is to help to treat

1. the causes and possible contributing factors of the illness, such as stress, unhealthy food intake, alcohol, cigarette smoking and lack of exercise.
2. To decrease the symptoms of the disease, by helping the person to stay in remission and to decrease the severity and frequency of relapses reoccurring.
3. To decrease the risks of complications occurring-complications of both the illness and of the treatments.
4. To help the patient to cope and function better, in family life, at work, and socially. It helps the patient to improve their own inner healing, it helps to lessen the disease in many cases, and is not very expensive. Western scientific research is being researched more and one study shows that acupuncture is **effective** in decreasing disease activity and in improving disease related symptoms (1).

Western Medical Review

Description. Crohn's disease is usually an ongoing, reoccurring illness, with inflammation and thickening of the wall of the intestine that usually occurs in the distal part of the small intestine, but may occur anywhere between the stomach and the anal area. It usually affects young adults, with a prevalence of 0.5-24.5/100,000 persons (8).

Causes. Not known, but related to family history, imbalance of the immune system, and stress, and other possible predisposing factors as discussed above.

Symptoms: May be mild to moderate to severe—with remissions and relapses—usually loose stool which may be accompanied by the passage of mucus and blood in the stool, may also get constipation, colic, intermittent fever, loss of appetite, weight

loss, feeling unwell, with loss of energy. Patients may also present with complications of Crohn's disease such as the formation of fistulae—which is a connection between the intestine and other body organs, also intestinal obstruction, anaemia, need ongoing regular bowel tests to out-rule bowel tumour development, and other conditions. They may also present with illnesses not related to the intestine such as arthritis and inflammation of the eyes. The doctor will also note if the patient is presenting with a side effect of medical and/or surgical treatment.

Diagnosis: Diagnosis is based on the doctor taking a history from the patient of their symptoms, and on examining the patient. Some of the investigations include blood tests, x-ray of the intestines using barium, colonoscopy—a view of the inside of most of the large intestine, taking a biopsy, scans, and maybe other tests. These tests are needed to out rule other conditions such as ulcerative colitis, tumour of the bowel, diverticulosis, bowel infection, irritable bowel syndrome and other conditions.

Treatment. Treatments include medication to decrease the bowel inflammation, anti-inflammatory medication, and medication to decrease the body's own immune system from attacking itself—this includes using steroids and immunosuppressant agents, antibiotics, and may need to consider biologic therapy such as infliximab. Also medication to decrease pain, anti-diarrhoeal agents, and possible re-hydration. May also be advised high calorie intake, decreased residue diet, with vitamin and mineral supplements due to some malabsorption conditions, especially vitamin B12.

Treatments may also include surgical treatment, and treatment of complications of Crohn's disease.

Prognosis. Patients with Crohn's disease usually experience periods of remission, the majority live normal lives, have families, and hold down jobs successfully.

Chinese Medical Review

Acupuncture- the insertion of needles at specific points in the body, has been in practice in China for thousands of years and has stood the test of time where it is the result of a continuous process of clinical analysis and testing based on a system that, if beneficial results keep reoccurring, then you know that it works - a different approach to ours in the west which is based more on a scientific basis,-- and in recent years is more verifiable by medical research and controlled clinical trials (2,3). An acupuncturist using Chinese acupuncture, takes a holistic approach to the patient from a physical, emotional and psychological point of view. He will work on the flow of energy within the body called 'Chi' which is affected by illness, balances any excess or deficiency of the energy and the flow of energy within the body. An acupuncturist has a knowledge of what is known as the five elements, the five fundamental substances, the external and internal eastern causes of disease, and of the Zang-Fu organs within the body and other features which are woven into a

pattern of diagnosis, for example, damp-heat, chi deficiency, chi stagnation, yin deficiency and/or other syndromes as diagnosed from the patient by the acupuncturist. An acupuncturist has to read the disharmony within the body, read how the body is trying to heal itself, and accelerate that healing processes within the body. Working with the different five element cycles to re- balance the internal environment of the body in this illness, has a relationship with western scientific medicine, where balancing its internal environment is related to many systems such as the endocrine system and the autonomic nervous system. An acupuncturist takes a detailed history –much of which is different from the questions asked in western medicine. Much information is also obtained from looking at the person's tongue, and from examining the right and left hand pulses, to help to interpret the internal environment of the body. The tongue is an internal organ, so by looking at the disorders in the tongue you are also looking at the disorders of the other organs of the body-for example when a doctor looks at the person's skin he can say the person is anaemic if the skin is pale .

There are more than three hundred acupuncture points on the surface of the body, and an acupuncturist may use between ten and twenty sterile disposable acupuncture needles in a session which may take nearly one hour. Usually one treatment a week is needed for four to six weeks and then usually less often after that to reinforce the healing processes .Acupuncture is not supposed to be painful-the patient usually feels a pinch like sensation, with a fullness, aching sensation.

Some acupuncturists use more a western approach called Trigger Point Acupuncture, or dry needling acupuncture, which has mainly a western medical approach, where they would focus on factors such as the same nerve segment on the surface of the body as that of the internal organ affected, and also focus on other factors such as the body's own internal opioid peptides and own steroid production ,serotonin and noradrenaline balance in the brain system, the autonomic nervous system, reciprocal connections to the limbic system, and many other physiological processes.

So an acupuncturist takes a history, examines the person, and formulates a treatment plan for to use the acupuncture needles. Patients often say that stress makes their symptoms worse, so the practitioner may discuss some relaxation techniques with the patient (7).

Acupuncture helps to decrease the inflammation of the intestine (4, 6), and to work on the immune system (5).

An acupuncturist may also use an electrical instrument called Electro-Acupuncture, which stimulates the acupuncture needles as in manual needling acupuncture, to many different features such as intensity and frequency of stimulation, so as to optimise the acupuncture treatment .

As can be seen there are different types of acupuncture, and each type have features In common, and which overlap.

An acupuncturist must be always aware of contraindications and precautions to acupuncture.

Acupuncture must be used only to complement the patient's family doctor's treatment.

Research

More and more research and clinical trials are being done to show the benefits of acupuncture in treating illnesses. This is a relatively new science that is developing over the last forty to fifty years. However Eastern acupuncture is at least five thousand years old, and has stood the test of time. Rather than being based on scientific evidence that it works, it is based on reading and thinking out the disorder and the healing process , clinical observation, and testing, and if beneficial results keep reoccurring, then you know that it works.

Acupuncture treatment has a role in treating Crohn's disease, and more study, research, and clinical trials are now taking place on this.

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Common Gastrointestinal conditions and their treatment with Acupuncture and Dietary Changes

Gastro-intestinal conditions are amongst the most common to be seen in a GPs surgery, and are equally common in Acupuncture clinics. Broadly these conditions might be grouped as 1) Non serious digestive complaints that can often be treated with changes to diet, lifestyle, over the counter medication and alternative treatments such as acupuncture; and 2) Chronic gastro-intestinal conditions that have potentially serious implications for health and usually require medical supervision and intervention, alongside dietary changes and supportive therapies such as acupuncture.

This article will take a broad look, in both western and Chinese medical terms, at two conditions falling into the second category, Ulcerative Colitis and Crohn's, and the role that Acupuncture and diet can play in their treatment.

Ulcerative Colitis and Crohn's

Ulcerative Colitis, and Crohn's are described as Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD), and their cause is an auto-immune disorder. They share several main symptoms including diarrhea, constipation, fatigue, weight loss, blood and mucous in the stools, severe abdominal pain and cramps.

They are treated with drugs appropriate to the degree of severity, including anti-inflammatories, steroids and auto-immune suppressants. However, not all patients respond to the same drugs, and finding the optimum drug for an individual involves a degree of trial and error. Of the two conditions, Crohn's is considered the more serious. In severe IBD cases surgery may be necessary.

Treatment with Acupuncture

People with milder versions of IBD may be able to manage their condition without drugs and will seek Acupuncture treatment only when they are experiencing a flare up and need support. Others may require support while they are waiting to try a different drug, and others still may find that in spite of being on the best drug for them and making dietary changes, their symptoms are still incompletely controlled.

The symptoms we should expect to see in Acupuncture clinics will therefore vary in terms of nature and severity, although we will usually see milder versions of the main symptoms, and can expect to make good improvements to many of them, notably fatigue and diarrhea.

A failure to respond well to Acupuncture treatment could be due to a number of factors, including the severity of the condition; the number of times the patient is

able to attend for treatment in a week (e.g. treatment dose); unresolved dietary and other lifestyle issues (such as smoking and stress); and, the possibility that medications themselves are contributing to the symptoms. For example, some of the side effects of Puri Nethol, which is used to treat both Ulcerative Colitis and Crohn's, include diarrhea, fatigue and abdominal pain. Similarly, repeated treatment of intestinal infections with high doses of anti-biotics can cause nausea, loss of appetite, epigastric pain, abdominal cramps, diarrhea and weight loss. Therefore, for a number of reasons, Acupuncture practitioners need to be alert to the fact that patients may need to be referred back to their GP, Consultant or Dietician for review. Besides the main symptoms described above, as Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) practitioners we will also notice symptoms that are not normally associated with the condition by western medicine, or indeed by the patients themselves. In other words, Chinese Medicine's understanding of the patho-mechanisms involved with chronic gastrointestinal conditions recognises, and can treat, a wider range of signs and symptoms occurring in patients with IBD.

For example, tooth grinding at night, skin conditions, facial redness and flushing, persistent cough and sinusitis can all be explained and treated by regulating 'Yangming' and 'Taiyin', two of the main Channels involved in gastro-intestinal complaints.

Although research is limited, there is scientific evidence to support the use of Acupuncture to treat IBD. For example, a trial of 51 patients with Crohn's disease were randomly assigned to two groups. Both groups received ten treatments over a four week period. The TCM group received points based on TCM pattern differentiation, plus moxibustion, while the control group received shallow sham acupuncture at non-acupuncture points without obtaining deqi. The outcome was measured by the Crohn's Disease Activity Index which rates eight symptoms and signs such as diarrhea, abdominal pain, well-being and red blood cell count. The real acupuncture group showed a significantly greater benefit that persisted when all patients were reassessed after 16 weeks. At this stage the treatment group showed a significant improvement in al-acid glycoprotein, a marker of bowel inflammation (Presented at the ARRC Symposium, October 7th 2001).

Diet

There is no evidence to suggest that food causes IBD, although many patients report their conditions are aggravated by certain foods and it is widely accepted that dietary changes can have an important role to play in symptom management. In mild-moderate cases such measures can make the difference between needing medication and being able to control the condition without help.

However, in spite of the evidence to support dietary changes in the management of symptoms, Gastroenterologists treating IBD don't automatically refer patients to Dieticians for dietary advice and supervision, and patients may have to seek this kind

of support on their own initiative. Dietitians are increasingly likely to recommend the FODMAP diet, which restricts several food groups, because of growing recognition of its success in helping conditions like IBD and Irritable Bowel Syndrome.

While certain foods are commonly cited as causes of aggravation, it is usually a matter of trial and error for each individual to establish their particular triggers. For example, some sources recommend porridge as being extremely beneficial for Crohn's, and yet there are individuals who find it exacerbates inflammation and causes diarrhea. Equally, not everyone finds dairy, which is often cited as an aggravating factor in Ulcerative Colitis, to be problematic.

In terms of supplements, there is a body of evidence to suggest that Vitamin D can play a role in helping to manage mild to moderate Colitis and Crohn's (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23594800>). Similarly, probiotics can be important for patients who have had repeated courses of anti-biotics to treat intestinal infections associated with Crohn's and Colitis (<http://www.webmd.com/digestive-disorders/news/20120508/probiotics-reduce-antibiotic-diarrhea>)

Given the variations in severity of IBD, different food sensitivities, and the general lack of consensus about diet and nutrition, it can be difficult for Acupuncturists to offer advice to patients based on TCM's theory of Food Energetics. All too easily it could add yet another confusing layer of information to an already crowded arena. Nonetheless, the basic principles have withstood the test of time, and TCM practitioners can consider offering their patients broad indications of what may suit their constitutional type, pattern of disharmony, and the season.

Interestingly, some western theories about diet and nutrition seem to have been shifting towards TCM principles for several years. In terms of cookery, there is more emphasis on eating foods that are in season and cooking them appropriately, while dietary health advice appears to be shifting its focus from 'low fat' diets to 'right kind of fats, with low red meat, sugar and dairy', all of which is consistent with TCM advice, especially for people said to have a weak Spleen. In fact, some of this health advice originates from studies about the diet and lifestyle of rural Chinese people over a period of 20 years, which concluded that many of the major diseases affecting western society can be reversed or managed with dietary changes based on the diet of the rural Chinese (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_China_Study and <http://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/health-family/my-health-experience-i-stopped-eating-the-wrong-foods-and-was-astonished-by-the-results-1.1728320?page=2>).

In practice, however, it is still advisable to suggest that patients with more severe gastro-intestinal conditions see a Dietician, not least because the elimination of food groups like dairy products has implications for calcium levels and bone density, and

obtaining professional advice on alternative calcium sources is essential. Likewise, anaemia can become an issue because the high fiber content of green vegetables exacerbates symptoms in some people. Patients can therefore struggle to obtain sufficient iron and other essential minerals and vitamins without proper dietary supervision and advice.

Case Studies

Crohn's and joint pain: A 36 year old male sought treatment for low back and hip joint pain and stiffness, associated with his Crohn's (a condition called Sacroiliitis). The patient was taking pain killers at the time of presenting to clinic and rated his pain as being 6/6 (6 being worst, zero being pain free) without medication, and 3/6 while taking painkillers. The patient's spine and hips were examined. Palpation of the Du Channel revealed pronounced tenderness on Du19 and a series of rice grain sized 'bubbles' under the skin at lumbar vertebrae 1-5. The condition was diagnosed as obstruction of Qi and Blood in the Du channel. Treatment involved Du19 with a special needling technique and 5 one-cun needles threaded under the skin on top of the spinous processes of L1-5. After one treatment the patient's pain and stiffness were almost gone, and with a further treatment they were completely resolved.

Colitis and Tooth Grinding at night: A 43 year old male sought treatment for pain in the teeth and jaws caused by teeth grinding at night. The condition had been ongoing for several years, and they had been advised by their dentist to wear a gum shield to avoid damaging their teeth. Neither the dentist nor patient's doctor could establish a reason for the grinding, although stress was suggested. When he presented for treatment of his tooth and jaw pain the patient recounted that he had suffered from colitis for over 20 years, but had recently ceased taking steroids owing to side effects. After stopping the steroids the patient had sought help from a Kinesiologist who advised him to eliminate dairy from his diet. The patient's symptoms of diarrhea and fatigue improved significantly within days of making this dietary change, although he still experienced fatigue and required a nap in the afternoons. The patient did not associate the tooth grinding and pain with his Ulcerative Colitis.

The patient had a red complexion, pale tongue with thin cracks in the Stomach region, and a fine, deep pulse. Pronounced tenderness, 'lumps', 'bubbles' and areas of deficiency were found on both Yangming and Taiyin Channels. The condition presented as a mixture of Excess and Deficiency, so the first treatment bled Jingwell points at both ends of the Yangming channel to clear Excess Heat. The patient felt the pain worsened for a day after the first treatment, then began to improve. The treatment was repeated twice, by which time the tooth and jaw pain had disappeared. Later, other points were added to address the low energy. After 9 treatments in total the tooth grinding and pain had stopped, and the patient no longer experienced daily fatigue.

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What good digestive health means for our wellbeing from a TCM point of view

Spring has started and many people focus their attention again on a healthy diet and lifestyle. I see many patients in my clinic at this time of the year with recurrent digestive complaints and bowel problems. Beside treating my patient's individual digestive health problems with acupuncture and herbs I also provide nutritional advise.

Food is our body's fuel to provide us with all the substances and building blocks which our body requires to function, grow and maintain an equilibrium for perfect health. Digestion is the breakdown of food which starts in the mouth by chewing. Digestion continues in the stomach where gastric juice works on protein breakdown and bile secretion on fats. The digestive process continues in the duodenum with enzymes secreted from the pancreas. Further digestion follows in the small Intestine which absorbs 95% of nutrients into the bloodstream. Water and minerals are reabsorbed in the colon and the waste material is eliminated from the rectum. To be healthy and energetic we need to have healthy, fresh, unprocessed food, healthy organs provide adequate digestion.

Examining digestive health, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) provides us with an understanding of the correspondences between our food intake and our individual constitution and external environment, our physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health.

The ancient Chinese used the yin and yang principle to create and maintain harmony and equilibrium within our bodies and also within our environment. The yin principle is passive while the yang is active. Yin is associated with cold, contraction, fluids, interior, deficient and chronic conditions while yang is connected with heat, fire, expansion, exterior, acute conditions. If either yin or yang predominates, the one in excess tends to weaken the other. If we experience excessive heat in our body, we become thirsty, our body fluids dry and may cause constipation, we may complain about heart burn, a general sense of feeling " hot and bothered ". Overconsumption of spicy food, a meat- centered diet with hard physical work may create the consumption of yin over a period of time. In adverse, Yin becomes predominant through excessive consumption of cold and raw foods , can injure our body's energy, heat turns into cold, may cause diarrhea, feeling tired and fatigued. The Five Element Theory in Chinese Medicine teaches us about seasonal attunement. The seasons of the year have an effect on our dietary needs, all our organs, growth and wellbeing. If we listen to our body and follow the natural cycle of the four seasons and the principle of Yin and Yang, we will have a well adjusted diet which creates balance and harmony for the interaction of our organs and is the best preventative for a healthy body.

Spring is the new beginning, has a Yang action, is associated with the Wood Element of the Five Elements and with the organs Liver and Gallbladder. The liver is considered to be the Yin organ and the gallbladder the Yang organ of the Wood Element. It is the time for renewal when the liver cleanses itself. It is natural to eat less or to fast to cleanse the body of the fatty and heavy foods from the previous winter.

The diet should be light, and contain fresh green vegetable and cereal grasses. This will help to detox our liver, prevent the extreme tiredness which so many people experience in spring time. It will boost our immune system and prevent colds and flus. Sweet and pungent flavored foods like mint tea with honey benefit the livers natural detox function. Pungent herbs of basil, fennel, rosemary, dill are complementary at this time. Carbohydrates in form of legumes, grains and seeds are preferable and young beets, carrots provide the sweet flavor to harmonize the pungent foods so beneficial for the liver in spring. The emotion associated with the liver are frustration, aggression (think of the effect of alcohol which is harmful to the liver) and impulsive behavior, mood swings and depression. I always observe in my clinic how the emotions in a patient change when I treat the liver with acupuncture and the appropriate dietary adjustment. In accordance it is also very beneficial to increase the amount of physical exercise which moves Liver Qi and counteracts depressive feelings. When the liver is stagnant, the bile secretion from the gallbladder may be inhibited causing digestive problems like gallstones, indigestion, flatulence and pain below the rib cage. The avoidance of fatty foods, heavy meats and alcohol will support the gallbladder in this season. Pears, lemon, lime and the spice turmeric will help the gallbladder to cleanse and strengthen its function for the coming year ahead. The mental attribute of the Gallbladder is the ability to organize and plan, again a quality very useful to us at the beginning of the new year.

Summer is a Yang season and associated with the Fire Element which is reflected by outdoor activities, expansion, brightness, heat and creativity. The organs of the Fire Element are Heart (Yin) and Small Intestine (Yang) . In Chinese Medicine the heart includes not only the organ itself but also the Heart as a concept of the seat of the emotional/mental centre. If our Spirit

(Shen) can settle in our Heart at nighttime we will find peaceful sleep rather suffering from insomnia. Food in the summer should be light, vegetable and fruit should be of this season. Cooling foods like salads, cucumbers, melons, red berries and cooling drinks are preferable. Dispersing hot spices are appropriate, they bring body heat out to the surface. Fatty foods and heavy meats and excess carbohydrates will cause sluggishness and tiredness . The small intestine will be strengthened with fresh, light foods, rich of minerals, vitamins and fluid. It prepares this digestive organ to be strong in its absorption function for the following seasons when our foods will change to more richer foods.

Late Summer is associated with the Earth Element and its respective organs of Stomach (Yang) and Spleen (Yin) . This is the season of transition , when nature's Yang function slowly changes to Yin quality. The appropriate foods at this time are mildly sweet foods which harmonize our stomach and spleen. These are corn, carrots, soy beans, potatoes, sweet potatoes, string beans, tofu, rice, amaranth, peas, apricots and mild spices. Rather than cold foods like in winter, we prepare foods by mild cooking, the use of warm water and oils. Spleen-pancreas and stomach aid digestion and distribution of food and nutrients and have the purpose to build up the Wei Qi Energy which represents immunity, vitality, builds up body heat for the coming winter season and helps with mental functions. Symptoms of Spleen-Pancreas-Stomach imbalance are chronic tiredness, weak digestion, abdominal bloating, loose stools, blood sugar imbalances, weight problems and mental stagnation, inclination to pensiveness and worry.

Autumn is associated with the Metal Element and the organs of Lung (Yin) and Large Intestine (Yang). The seasons foods are now most beneficial, like potatoes, apples, leeks, beans, grapes, plums. Foods should be slowly cooked and baked. Since it is the season of contraction sour foods can aid this process. Sourdough bread, sauerkraut, olives, pickles, cheese, grapefruit stimulate this activity. Warm drinking water aids the nourishment of Yin, benefits the Lungs and Large Intestine. Dryness in the body presents dry skin, lips, nose and throat. Ideal foods are soya milk, eggs, barley, malt, pear, spinach, almonds and nuts, fish and pork. Adding tiny amounts of salt binds water in the body and prevents dryness. Be very careful though if you have high blood pressure, salt needs to be avoided. The emotions of the Lungs are grief and sadness, unhealthy attachments are associated with the colon. Pungent foods are cleansing and protecting. Pungent foods help to disperse too much mucous from the lungs. Foods rich in fibers aid peristalsis in the colon and can be helpful in constipation. Green vegetable and fiber rich grains are preferable.

Winter closes the cycle of the seasons. The dark and cold season encourages us to get more rest, more sleep, to preserve the body's energy. The associated Element is Water and the organs are Kidneys and Bladder. We need warm, cooked foods , salty and bitter flavors promote food and fluid storage in the body. Excessive cold foods and drinks injure the energy of Kidney and Bladder. In Chinese Medicine the Kidneys are the root of Qi, the source of all our energy. It is vitally important to preserve this energy. Good Kidney Qi prevents early aging. Symptoms of Kidney imbalance are chronic backache, feeling cold, pain in knees and bones, urinary, sexual and reproductive problems. The emotion of the Kidneys are fearful feelings , guilt and shame are associated with the Bladder. Cystitis is a common symptom of a bladder problem. Foods supporting our organs in the winter are meats, chicken, fish, warm cooked vegetable, sea weed, tofu, beans, potatoes, eggs, cheese, cloves, ginger, fenugreek, all members of the onion family, garlic, and warm drinking water and teas.

Again after the winter season we need to cleanse our body from the rich foods from the cold dormant season. In spring we have to detox and let go of the "Old" to make space for the "New". This represents itself in our body, the physical level as well as on our emotional, mental and spiritual level. Digestion does happen in our body, heart and mind. If we live and eat according to Nature's cycle, we aid the natural process of growth and development in our body, support healthy organs and are able to prevent many diseases which accumulate over many years through an unhealthy diet and life style.

Reference : Healing with Whole Foods by Paul Pitchford

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