

HEALTH REPORT

VOLUME 10

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ACUPUNCTURE GETS ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FROM MAINSTREAM MEDICINE GROUP!

The acceptance of Acupuncture in the medical community received a major boost recently from the American Society of Anesthesiologists showing that the use of Acupuncture continues to grow in acceptance in mainstream medicine.

The association has established new guidelines for the handling of nausea and vomiting following surgery. The use of Acupuncture has now been approved as a very acceptable means of controlling both problems, according to the society.

These two distressing symptoms are frequently experienced by patients who receive general anesthesia. Drugs are commonly used to help alleviate these conditions. However, administering drugs can present a wide variety of dangerous side effects.

The type of Acupuncture recommended is quite simple and not very complicated to deliver. In fact, according to Dr. Tong J. Gan of Duke University, “Only one point is needed, the T6 point.” (The T6 Acupuncture point is located in the abdominal region.)

“Physicians don’t realize the high priority patients place on reducing or eliminating post-op nausea and vomiting,” said Dr. Gan. “There are studies showing that patients would prefer pain over nausea and vomiting.”

Now, with Acupuncture officially accepted by the American Society of Anesthesiologists, the use of this simple form of treatment should become much more widespread and available – potentially bringing immediate relief to numerous post-op patients.

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ACUPUNCTURE & WESTERN MEDICINE: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO REHABILITATION!

An innovative program that may herald the entry of Acupuncture into the traditional Western medical setting is kicking off in New York. St. Vincent's Hospital in Manhattan will be the site of a very unique program that will offer patients free or low cost access to Acupuncture in the facility's Department of Rehabilitation.

A collaborative effort with the Chinese Medical Science Foundation (CMSF) will make this specialized care possible. It is expected that more than 1,500 patients will receive services through the Acupuncture Fellowship Program.

The benefits of Acupuncture have been known for thousands of years in the East, but acceptance of its benefits by mainstream medicine in the West have been slow in coming. This new program that took over two years to develop shows that Acupuncture is now poised to reach many more people through mainstream channels.

Throughout the program, evaluations and studies will be made of issues involved in the full integration of Acupuncture within a Western medical care facility. St. Vincent Catholic Medical Centers is one of the New York metropolitan area's most comprehensive health care organizations, serving nearly 600,000 people annually.

"This program provides a model that is critical to the future of the way medicine is practiced," said Linda Rapuano, director of the Mind/Body/Spirit Program at St. Vincent's. "We will closely follow Acupuncture's contributions to the overall recovery and well-being of our rehab patients."

Dr. Ning Ma is the founder of CMSF and will supervise Acupuncture delivery. "The Acupuncture Fellowship Program is a groundbreaking initiative with benefits for patients, hospitals, and Acupuncturists. We believe our partnership with St. Vincent's could develop a model for the future of integrative medicine."

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MODERN SCIENCE FINDS ACUPUNCTURE MERIDIANS

Even though Acupuncture has been around for well over 5,000 years, the concept is still very new and strange to many Americans. Almost everyone is familiar with the function of organs, blood vessels, muscles and nerves, but a discussion of such things as “energy flows” soon puts most into unfamiliar territory.

The main thing to know about Acupuncture is that it has everything to do with maintaining balance in the body. A body operating in perfect equilibrium will have a much greater ability to maintain good health than one that is not.

A growing number of people have now heard about “meridians” in the body. Meridians are lines, or pathways, along which the body’s energy is believed to flow. Points used in Acupuncture are located along these pathways having evolved through thousands of years of practice in number of different countries.

The knowledge of energy flows and pathways is becoming increasingly recognized and utilized in Western medicine. Even though this energy can’t be detected by sight, it is very much present and can be tapped in both treatment and diagnosis in Western medicine.

Today we have such tools as electrical muscle exams (EMGs), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and a variety of other similar tests. Science and the medical profession have accepted the existence of the meridian system as an integral part of human functioning. It controls and coordinates an electromagnetic system within the body and this may actually control all the other systems of the body.

It could be most simple to consider meridians as being similar to radio waves. The human eye can see neither of these; but both are present and operate at their best when they are totally tuned in. A radio station broadcasting at 94.5 would provide static if it was tuned to 94.6. Similarly, a meridian operating out of balance would not produce optimum health.

With this knowledge in hand, an increasing number of chiropractors are working in conjunction with and making recommendations to patients to seek Acupuncture treatment. It’s another drug-free type of practice that’s growing in acceptance in America — and many are experiencing excellent results.

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ACUPUNCTURE INSURANCE COVERAGE ON THE RISE

People considering Acupuncture treatments to help what ails them, but who are concerned about paying out-of-pocket for its benefits, may be in for a nice surprise. An increasing number of health insurance plans now cover visits to an acupuncturist.

A recent rise in insurance plans that include Acupuncture has occurred. This is during a time when companies offering health benefits to their employees has declined and the cost of insurance has risen sharply. Cost conscious employers are recognizing the benefits of alternative medicine treatments and have begun to integrate these therapies into their existing insurance plans.

A recent example of this trend was presented in a survey released by the Kaiser Family Foundation and Health Research and Educational Trust. The September 2004 survey revealed that employer coverage for Acupuncture increased 14 percent from 2002 to 2004, making it one of the fastest-growing alternative medicine therapies to be included as a covered service for American workers with health benefits. The survey included 3,017 randomly selected public and private companies.

Results showed that 47 percent of all employers questioned offered Acupuncture as a covered health benefit, up from 33 percent in 2002. Large firms were more likely to include Acupuncture as a covered benefit, regardless of the type of insurance plan offered. Fifty percent of all large firms (200 or more employees) surveyed offered coverage for Acupuncture, compared to 41 percent of small firms.

“There are some employers out there who are saying, “No new benefits of any type,”” said George DeVries, chief executive officer of American Specialty Health Plans, an insurance provider that adds alternative coverage to traditional insurance plans. “But there are many employers who are saying, ‘Adding a low-cost benefit actually helps us in a time when we’re increasing deductibles and co-pays and co-insurance.’”

Persons considering Acupuncture treatments should check their insurance benefits to see if treatments are covered. If it’s not, asking an employer to consider adding coverage to an existing insurance plan may bring positive results for the future.