

"What Points Do You Use For _____?"

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Without hesitation, the number-one question posed to me by doctors interested in the application of acupuncture is simply, "What points do you use for _____?"

This simplified approach to what many practitioners feel is the practice of acupuncture is in reality a far cry from proper applications that deal with a host of theoretical and procedural processes both ancient and modern.

Even though this article will be read by doctors around the world, I speak especially to my American brethren who, having been born Americans, feel we have the birthright to change ancient acupuncture traditions. It appears this is quickly becoming a global trend. Some seek to make acupuncture easier and less complicated, sometimes disregarding the hows, whys and historical significance of acupuncture.

Many health care practitioners who "dabble" with acupuncture through simple stimulation of patterns of acupuncture points often find themselves frustrated when they achieve outstanding results on some patients, but no response on others. This is usually attributed to the fact that many practitioners commonly use cookbook approaches. Even though they are acceptable, they are not specific for the individual patient.

The practitioner must understand the reasoning behind the specific points on the meridian system and how and why they are used in a clinical practice, as opposed to the simple, "What points do you use for _____?" To practice proper acupuncture, the medical/chiropractic professional needs an understanding of the principles of acupuncture, along with scientific correspondences and knowledge of special reflex areas that are essential to its successful practice.

Acupuncture does not have to involve the myriad of myth, shamanism and folklore that abounds in many of the ancient principles of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). TCM is just one method of a large multinational system which includes Japan, Korea, Taiwan, southeast Asia and Malaysia, not to mention every country in Europe which has used acupuncture extensively for centuries. European applications have demystified many of acupuncture's explanations that are more compatible with Western scientific thought.

Still, practitioners will continue to ask, "What points are good for _____?" In *The Science of Acupuncture Therapy*, Richard Cheng, MD, PhD, discusses many of these orthopedic/neurologic basic points and formulas. These points have been found to be effective in the majority of cases based on neurologic explanations, rather than the TCM explanations.

Dr. Cheng, a personal friend of mine and faculty member of the International Academy of Medical Acupuncture, is a neurophysiologist who is internationally recognized researcher. He was one of the principal researchers in the discovery of endorphins and enkephalins at the University of Toronto. His work has been published in numerous prestigious scientific journals that earned him the first PhD in acupuncture research in North America. Following are specific points Dr. Cheng's neurologic research has shown to be extremely effective in pain control.

The points will only be listed by number. (Dr. Cheng's book is illustrated). Should you not know the location of these powerful points, bring out your acupuncture chart or mannequin and begin your review. I have personally used these important points for years. The following represent just a few from the book.

Neuralgic Headaches

GV 15; TW 17; ST 4; GB 1; GB 14; ST 7; LI 20; BL 2; BL 9

Acupuncture Points for Neck Pain

GV 16; GV 15; GV 14; BL 10; BL 11; GB 20; GB 21; SI 15; SI 17; ST 9

Sciatica

GB 30; BL 54 (UB 40)

Elbow Pain

LI 11; LI 10; P 3; SI 8

Wrist Pain

TH 4; LI 5

Hip Pain

SP 12; BL 49; BL 48; GB 31; LIV 11

Knee Disorders

SP 9; SP 10; GB 34; LIV 7; GB 33; ST 35; knee eye; ST 32; BL 53; KI 10

Ankle Pain

KE 3; BL 60; ST 41

Dr. Cheng lists the following as the 11 master/major points that should be learned in detail:

LI 4; HT 7; LI 11; GB 20; P 6; TW 5; GV 26; ST 36; SP 6; SP 10; Shen Men (ear)

As the practice of acupuncture has now become firmly established in North America, it is important that the chiropractic physician becomes more acutely aware of the nature of acupuncture and not rely on simple formulae. Even though many formulae and powerful points remain an important part of even traditional acupuncture, being able to devise a treatment approach based on the individual patient is what will set you apart from the mediocre practitioner.

Learn acupuncture well!

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