

Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine

Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine (AOM) provides 50% of healthcare to patients of all ages in some Asian countries [i]. People in the U.S. may wonder how this is possible since AOM does not rely upon modern pharmaceutical, high-tech, or invasive methods like Western medicine does. Rather, AOM applies ancient and holistic methods, and disease theories to the continuum of modern healthcare needs, which ranges from primary care and prevention to hospital-based care. Here is an introduction on what AOM is and how it works compared to Western medicine.

TREATMENT METHODS. Herbal therapy and acupuncture are the two treatment methods within Oriental Medicine. Acupuncture consists of stimulating special points on the skin with a variety of techniques [ii]. These special points are located using surface anatomy and a unit of measurement called a "cun" (the width of one's thumb). One technique involves the **very** shallow insertion of thin, supple, and sterile single-use needles that are gently stimulated then left in place for 10 to 60 minutes. *Non-needle* techniques include acupressure, electro-current, light, heat (moxabustion), and bodywork (tuina, cupping, and gua sha).

HOW IT WORKS. Acupuncture points are poetically described as caves of healing energy potential. What ancient Oriental medicine scholars understood about harnessing this potential is being researched and theorized today. Slowly being revealed are the many ways acupuncture affects anatomy, physiology, and brain chemistry. For example, depending on the technique used, acupuncture benefits pain by relaxing muscle spasm, releasing endorphins, calming peripheral nerves, moderating inflammatory pathways; and improving circulation etc.

DISEASE THEORY. Disease is rooted in *5 Essential Substances*: qi (metabolic processes), blood, jing (genetics, constitution), shen (spirit), and JinYE (fluids). Disease is symbolically caused by Climatic Factors such as wind, cold, heat, and damp; or Emotional Factors such as anger, worry, and grief. Disease is literally caused by Miscellaneous Factors such as poor diet, imbalanced rest vs. exercise, trauma; or Pestilential Factors from febrile, infectious, and environmental toxins. Disease is diagnosed by using *Four Inspections*: symptomology, physiognomy, tongue appearance, and pulse qualities (e.g. hemodynamics). There are *Eight Principles* or disease characteristics: yin and yang (e.g. anabolic-catabolic balance), hot and cold (e.g. acid-base balance), interior and exterior (e.g. **chronicity**), excess and deficient (e.g. **immune responses**).

AOM vs. WESTERN MEDICINE. The complex art and science of AOM as described above, has endured for over two millennia [iii]. Once mastered, AOM provides an amazing qualitative sensitivity that complements Western medicine's quantitative specificity in diagnosing and treating disease. In

fact, some medical schools and hospitals in China specialize in Integrative Medicine, accepting East and West as different sides of the same coin. Dr Yuning Wu, professor of Integrative Medicine, feels that utilizing the tools of Western and Oriental medicine together results in patient outcomes and/or quality of life that are better than either one could achieve alone [iv].

In the U.S., AOM is used for such things as chronic pain and stress, musculoskeletal injury, colds & flu, urological & gynecological complaints, mood disorders, side effects of chemotherapy, preparation for Interferon, stroke rehabilitation, drugs & alcohol abstinence and much more. For a free consult on how AOM can benefit you, contact Lori Kelsey Doctor of Oriental Medicine at 888-713-4543. Can schedule appointments online at www.spiritspringacupuncture.vpweb.com. Home visits and office appointments. 710 Main St. Clayton NM (Longevity Chiropractic bldg.).

Sources

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[iii] St. John, T., & Sandt, L. (2008). *Hepatitis C choices: Diverse viewpoints and choices for your hepatitis C journey* (4th ed.). Caring Ambassadors Program. Retrieved from www.hepcchallenge.org

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