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In this Newsletter I include 6 different medical conditions that recent research confirms that acupuncture can benefit. So if you have itchy skin, insomnia, plantar fasciitis, MS, Parkinson’s Disease or you wish to conceive, there is information for you.

ACUPUNCTURE SPECIFICALLY AFFECTS BRAIN AREA INVOLVED IN ITCH RESPONSE

American scientists have investigated the brain circuitry involved in the antipruritic (stopping itching) effects of acupuncture. They used fMRI to examine allergen-induced itch sensation in atopic dermatitis patients and its reduction by acupuncture,
Antihistamine and placebo treatments. Acupuncture was found to reduce itch and itch-evoked activation in the insula, putamen and premotor and prefrontal cortical areas of the brain. Neither itch sensation nor itch-evoked brain response was altered following antihistamine or placebo acupuncture. Greater itch reduction following acupuncture was associated with greater reduction in putamen response, a region implicated in habitual behaviour underlying the urge to scratch, specifically implicating this region in acupuncture’s antipruritic effects. Reference: The Brain Circuitry Mediating Antipruritic Effects of Acupuncture. Cereb Cortex. 2012 Dec 4.

**ACUPUNCTURE AS GOOD AS DRUGS FOR INSOMNIA**

A small Taiwanese study suggests that acupuncture could be used as an alternative to zolpidem (Ambien) for the treatment of insomnia. Thirty-three patients with primary insomnia were randomly chosen to receive either weekly acupuncture sessions or zolpidem (10mg per night) over a four-week period. At the end of the treatment period both groups were found to have improved significantly. (A comparison between acupuncture versus zolpidem in the treatment of primary insomnia. Asian J Psychiatr. 2012 Sep;5(3):231-5).

**ACUPUNCTURE PROVIDES ADDITIONAL HELP WITH PLANTAR FASCIITIS**

Electro-acupuncture (EA) coupled with conventional treatment is more effective than conventional treatment for plantar fasciitis, according to a pilot study carried out in Thailand. Thirty patients with chronic refractory plantar fasciitis were randomly assigned to two groups. Subjects in the control group received five weeks of conventional treatment, including stretching exercises, shoe modification and analgesics. Subjects in the acupuncture group received the same treatments plus ten twice-weekly sessions of electro-acupuncture. At the end of treatment, visual analogue scale (VAS) pain scores were found to have decreased significantly in both the acupuncture and control groups. However, Foot Function Index (a measure of the impact of foot pathology on foot function in terms of pain, disability and activity restriction) decreased significantly in the acupuncture group only. With successful treatment defined as a minimum 50% decrease in VAS, subjects in the acupuncture group experienced significantly higher success rates than those in control group (80% versus 13.3%, respectively), which were maintained at six-week follow-up. (Efficacy of electro-acupuncture in chronic plantar fasciitis: a randomized controlled trial. Am J Chin Med. 2012;40(6):1167-76).

**ACUPUNCTURE BENEFITS MS PATIENTS**

A pilot study carried out in Brazil provides evidence that electro-acupuncture (EA) can significantly improve quality of life for patients with relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis (RRMS). Thirty-one RRMS patients undergoing treatment with immunomodulators were randomly distributed into experimental and placebo groups, which received either true EA (TEA) or sham EA (SEA) once a week for 30 minutes per session, over six consecutive months. A single treatment protocol was developed for all patients, using acupuncture points reported to stimulate the immune system. For the experimental group, needles were inserted bilaterally at acupoints Zusanli ST-36, Sanyinjiao SP-6, Hegu L.I.-4 and Quchi L.I.-11, with a ninth needle inserted at Yintang N-HN-3. In the SEA group, needle insertion was superficial, located one centimetre away from the points used for the TEA group and no electrical stimulation was given. TEA was found to enhance various aspects of patients’ quality of life, including a significant reduction in subjective pain and depression scores. In addition participants in the TEA group reported improvements such as better sleep and appetite, reduced incontinence and constipation, and disappearance of leg spasms during treatment. (Impact of electroacupuncture on quality of life for patients with Relapsing-Remitting Multiple Sclerosis under treatment with immunomodulators: A randomized study. BMC Complement Altern Med. 2012 Nov 5;12(1):209).

**HERBAL FORMULA INCREASES PREGNANCY RATES IN IVF**

Chinese researchers have found that adding Er Zhi Tian Gui granules (ETG, Two Ultimates Tian Gui Granules) to the treatment regime of women undergoing IVF can reduce the dosage of gonadotropin (Gn) required for ovarian stimulation and shorten treatment duration, as well as alleviating clinical symptoms and improving clinical pregnancy rates. Sixty-six (66) infertile patients diagnosed with the TCM pattern of Kidney yin deficiency who were to undergo IVF embryo transfer (IVF-ET) were randomly assigned to either a treatment group or a control group.

Both groups received Gn therapy: the treatment group received ETG for three menstrual cycles before IVF-ET, while the control group received placebo granules. Scores for Kidney yin deficiency syndrome were assessed for each patient at baseline. Statistically significant differences were found between treatment and control groups in syndrome score changes before and after treatment. The dosage required and duration of Gn treatment were also significantly lower.
in the treatment group than those in the control group.

Rates of high-quality oocytes and embryos, as well as clinical pregnancy rates, were all higher in the treatment group than in the control group. In addition, levels of endometrial expression of the DNA methylating enzyme DNMT1 were found to be much higher in the treatment group than that in the control group after treatment. The authors postulate that upregulation of the expression of this protein may lead to enhanced endometrial receptivity and may explain the improvement in clinical pregnancy rates. (Effects of Chinese Medicines for Tonifying the Kidney on DNMT1 Protein Expression in Endometrium of Infertile Women During Implantation Period. J Altern Complement Med. 2012 Oct 17.

HERBS & SUPPLEMENTS SAFE! HOSPITALS ARE AS DANGEROUS AS GOING TO WAR

In an attempt to educate consumers and counter scaremongering, UK-based campaign group, the Alliance for Natural Health International (ANH-Intl) has put into perspective the risks involved in taking herbs and nutritional supplements. By means of an informative graphic, they show that that supplements – which are the target of increasingly restrictive ‘consumer protection’ legislation - are the safest substances to which we are commonly exposed.

By contrast, being admitted to a UK hospital or taking prescription drugs exposes a person to one of the greatest preventable risks in society. In fact, they warn, preventable medical injuries in UK hospitals expose you to around the same risk of death as being deployed on military service to Afghanistan – both of which are around 300,000 times greater than the risk of death from taking natural health products.

Additionally, the data shows that adverse reactions to pharmaceutical drugs are 62,000 times more likely to kill you than food supplements and 7,750 times more likely to kill you than herbal remedies. The data, which was collected from official sources in the UK and EU, demonstrate that both food supplements and herbal remedies are in the ‘super-safe’ category of individual risk – meaning risk of death from their consumption is less than 1 in 10 million. Besides drugs and hospital injuries, you're also more likely to die from being struck by lightning or drowning in your bathtub than having a lethal reaction to herbs or supplements. REFERENCE: anhinternational.org/news/anh-exclusive-natural-health-products-ultra-safe-and-drugs-dangerous-war).

NEEDLING YANGLINGQUAN GB-34 INHIBITS BRAIN’s MOTOR SYSTEM...AND ACTIVATES AREAS ASSOCIATED WITH PARKINSON’S DISEASE

Acupuncture needling at Yanglingquan GB-34, traditionally classified as an influential point for muscles and tendons, results in a subtle but specific inhibitory effect on the excitability of the brain’s motor system – the network of brain regions involved in activating muscles to produce body movements. In a German study, twenty healthy volunteers received both verum and sham (non-penetrating) acupuncture applied at right Yanglingquan GB-34, using a crossover design. Compared with sham, verum acupuncture significantly increased resting motor threshold, indicating that acupuncture at Yanglingquan GB-34 had an inhibitory effect on motor system excitability. (Effects of acupuncture needle penetration on motor system excitability. Neuropsychol Clin. 2012 Jun;42(4):225-30).

Korean scientists used fMRI to examine the neural responses of 12 patients with Parkinson’s disease (PD) and 12 healthy participants before and after acupuncture stimulation at Yanglingquan GB-34. Acupuncture stimulation increased neural responses in regions which are impaired by PD (substantia nigra, caudate, thalamus and putamen). REFERENCE: (Acupuncture Stimulation on GB34 Activates Neural Responses Associated with Parkinson’s Disease. CNS Neurosci Ther. 2012 Sep;18(9):781-90).

All the very best wishes for your optimal wellness and longevity from Louis and Linda.

The Clinic is located at 216 Ramsay Street, Middle Ridge, 5 houses south of Kate’s Place, directly opposite the Blue Care Nursing entrance, and beside the Story Farm Park. Parking signage is present. Follow the pavers to Entry signs to the Clinic at the rear of the house.

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