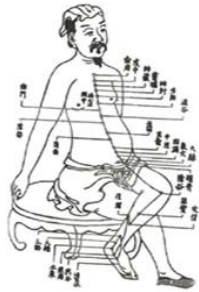


Ancient Arts Newsletter

Acupuncture and Mental Health

By Tom Ingegno M.S., L.Ac.

Acupuncture is finally getting recognized by the media to treat conditions ranging from back pain to infertility. While this is a step in the right direction, there is still very little media coverage of acupuncture's other benefits.



The World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes that acupuncture is an effective treatment for over 43 different common disorders. One of the most profound and unpublicized benefits is its ability to treat mental/emotional disorders. The WHO recognizes that emotional and psychological disorders including anxiety and depression can improve with acupuncture treatments.

Currently many clinics are using acupuncture to treat addiction to drugs, tobacco, and alcohol. These addiction problems also have a strong psychological component.

Many classical acupuncture texts state that a patient's mental condition is directly linked to their physical health.

Some schools of thought go a far to say that all diseases are a manifestation of an emotional imbalance. In fact the *Ling Shu (Spiritual Pivot)*, one of the most respected of the classical acupuncture texts, states that, "the superior physician treats the spirit." The Spirit, or Shen, in Chinese medicine is the culmination of a person's intelligence, emotions and soul. Many practitioners aim their acupuncture treatments specifically to target the spirit and treat emotional disorders.

Incorporating Acupuncture into a Mental Health Treatment Plan

Acupuncture is not designed to replace other mental health practitioners. It should serve as a complimentary treatment to modern therapies. In my personal experience, acupuncture has brought up past issues or memories during the treatment. Many patients have an "emotional release" during treatments, either crying or laughing without being sad or happy. When the patient has an emotional release or relives an experience during the treatment, they seem to have a breakthrough, and both physical and mental conditions improve much quicker. Many therapists suggest that when a patient has hit a plateau in their therapy, they should see an acupuncturist to help them get to the next level. It is suggested that acupuncture once a week, in combination with therapy, support groups or

other mental health modalities can help patients have a “breakthrough” quicker than patients who only used conventional therapies. In Asia acupuncture has been used to treat even extreme cases of psychoses and phobias with good results.

How Does It Work?

This section is specific to mental health, for basic information about acupuncture please go to www.acupuncture.com.

Many acupuncture points have names and indications which suggest that they are specifically used for emotional disorders. For example, a point on the dorsum of the foot is called *foot above tears*; this point is often used when a person is trying to overcome sadness. Specific treatments are aimed at relieving stress, helping advance a patient who feels “stuck”, and calming the spirit. In ancient Asia, many people felt that people who had these conditions were possessed, they developed treatments to release these patients from the possession. As people began to understand the mind, they realized that this was a psychological imbalance, but the treatments were still very effective. Colorful names like “Releasing the demons” and “Five spirit points” are still used in modern practice with great success, but with the understanding that we are pacifying the mind and not expelling evil forces.

About the Acupuncturist

Tom Ingegno M.S., L.Ac. is a graduate of the New York College of Wholistic Health. He has a Masters degree in Oriental Medicine, a Bachelors degree in Professional Health Science. Tom is nationally certified and Licensed in both New York and Maryland. He has taught

several classes at the New York College of Health Professions and the Pacific College of Oriental Medicine in New York. He was a Board Member of Edo Kai Traditional Acupuncture Society. In addition he is also certified in Animal Acupuncture.

Ancient Arts Acupuncture

For more information on this topic, please check out these links and books:

- www.acupuncture.com/Diagnosis/depression.htm
- <http://www.acupuncturetoday.com/archives2001/may/05anxiety.html>
- Nourishing Destiny by Lonny Jarret
- Dragon Rises, Red Bird Flies by Leon Hammer, M.D.
- Bee In Balance by Amber Rose, P.H.D., L.Ac.