



Acupuncture: Promise for Happy



by Shoshanna Katzman

Practiced throughout the world for thousands of years, acupuncture is a Chinese medicine modality for improving a multitude of health conditions. Acupuncture regulates overall health through working with Qi. Qi is a vital energy moving through the body via energy pathways known as meridians. Chinese medicine primarily views ill-health as a result of blockages in the flow of Qi occurring as a result of injury, trauma, improper diet, and environmental effects; contributing factors also include: excessive stress and pressure whether it is social, emotional, financial, relationships or job related. Through insertion of hair-thin needles into acupuncture points located along these meridians, positive results and outcomes are achieved through correction of these energy blockages.

Additionally, people are realizing the profound healing benefits that are garnered from acupuncture to ward off symptoms of depression. Receiving acupuncture provides a way to mend the intense and long lasting effects of depression – surfacing as a variety of devastating conditions that otherwise leads to difficulty in coping with daily stress, thus limiting ability for a happy, productive life. This has been supported by scientific research published in the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* which found acupuncture

to be as effective as antidepressants. As well as a Georgetown University research study reported in the April 2013 *Journal of Endocrinology* which demonstrated that acupuncture slows production of stress hormones – certainly a step in the right direction toward a healthy body, mind and spirit.

Chinese Medicine acknowledges and addresses excessive and toxic emotions as a key root cause of internal disease. Diagnosis in this circumstance is based on an evaluation of a person's specific energetic constitution in relationship to the predominant vital organ that is signaling imbalance combined with an individual's prevailing emotional disposition. This approach stems from the Law of the Five Elements which illustrates the inter-connections between the vital organs and our emotions. In terms of depression, the most common organ systems treated are the heart which is associated with sadness, liver with anger, and spleen meridian which is associated with overthinking and worry.

Acupuncture treatment for depression is thus typically applied to rebalance and revitalize the Qi flowing through the heart, liver or spleen meridian, or even a combination of all three when a broader approach is necessary to resolve symptoms. Through lifting and circulating the flow

of Qi physical problems associated with depression such as chronic pain, low immunity, headaches, insomnia, extreme fatigue, digestive disturbance, or degenerative disease have traditionally been helped via acupuncture. This also includes mind/spirit symptoms such as irritability, hopelessness, loss of love for life, lack of interest in being active and together with others, feeling worthless, no desire to get out of bed; as well as pessimism, anxiety and worry about the future.

In addition to acupuncture, Chinese medicine offers several treatment options to help resolve mental health issues. These enhance health through improving the function of internal organs, the interaction of the Five Elements, and the dynamic balance of Yin and Yang. This balancing of energies leads to sustainable changes throughout the body, mind and spirit - which according to Chinese medicine are inseparable. The explicit goal of acupuncture and other methods of Chinese medicine are to repair and re-establish this connection to ensure a long, happy and peaceful existence.

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