

Traditional Acupuncture

With an increasing number of people seeking acupuncture treatment, it is important for patients and healthcare professionals to understand the difference in the two types most commonly on offer.

Acupuncture, as practised by members of the British Acupuncture Council (BACc), is an holistic approach to health based on over 2000 years of development and refinement in the Far East. Western-style or medical acupuncture is a more recent development, practised predominantly by doctors and physiotherapists, which uses a more limited range of acupuncture techniques on the basis of a western medical diagnosis.

Traditionally, acupuncture is an holistic approach to the management of disease as well as the maintenance of health. The skill of an acupuncturist lies in the ability to make a traditional diagnosis from what is often a complex pattern of disharmony. The exact pattern and degree of disharmony is unique to each individual and with traditional acupuncture is always treated as such.

Acupuncture is a system of healing which has been practised in China and other Eastern countries for thousands of years. Although often described as a means of pain relief, it is in fact used to treat people with a wide

range of illnesses. Its focus is on improving the overall wellbeing of the patient, rather than the isolated treatment of specific symptoms.

According to traditional Chinese philosophy, our health is dependent on the body's motivating energy, known as Chi, moving in a smooth and balanced way through a series of meridians (channels) beneath the skin.

Chi consists of equal and opposite qualities – Yin and Yang – and when these become unbalanced, illness may result. By inserting fine needles into the channels of energy, an acupuncturist can stimulate the body's own healing response and help restore its natural balance.

The flow of Chi can be disturbed by a number of factors. These include emotional states such as anxiety, stress, anger, fear or grief, poor nutrition, weather conditions, hereditary factors, infections, poisons and trauma. The principal aim of acupuncture in treating the whole person is to restore the balance between the physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of the individual.

These notes are based, with permission, on text from The British Acupuncture Council.

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