

The Acupuncture Treatment

By Beth Quinn, Doctor of Acupuncture



Herbal medicine is itself a powerful method of healing. Western drugs will often control symptoms, but don't actually alter the disease process (antibiotics eliminate bacteria but do not improve a person's resistance to infection; diuretics treat excess fluid without improving kidney function). Chinese herbs treat the underlying condition as defined by traditional diagnosis, and rarely cause unwanted side effects.

Just as soil becomes depleted through overuse, so the Qi, Moisture, Blood are eroded by overwork, emotional tension, mental strain, too much or too little exercise, and inadequate diet or rest, impairing the capacity of the Organ Systems to do their jobs. Chinese medicine treats the body as a garden, not as a machine, and because Chinese medicine views people as ecosystems in miniature, it seeks to improve our capacity to balance and renew our resources. Chinese medicine can minimize the erosion of our soil by enriching it, maximize the flow of nutrients by increasing circulation, and help prevent obstructions in movement.

Often Western medicine intervenes only after a crisis has risen, whereas Chinese medicine anticipates

problems by sustaining our interior landscape. By correcting depletion and stagnation at earlier stages, greater problems are avoided later on.

The two are definitely not a substitute for each other. They are often complimentary. Whereas Western medicine may heroically rescue us, Chinese medicine can protect and preserve our day-to-day good health and general well-being.

Chinese medicine can effectively treat acute and chronic conditions and provide preventive care.

Testimonial

It was during Christmas week six years ago when I was diagnosed with the severe form of Alpha-1 Antitrypsin Deficiency and the resulting emphysema.

Alpha-1 antitrypsin (AAT) is a protein that plays a vital role in the lung's defenses. Manufactured in the liver, it protects the lung tissues from being damaged by the body's own defenses. When foreign elements invade the lungs, one type of white blood cell known as a "neutrophil" releases an enzyme called "neutrophil elastase" to attack the invaders. It's the job of the AAT protein to neutralize the elastase, to "shut it off", as skirmishes end or when the battle is over. If for any reason there is a deficiency in the AAT protein, then the destructive action of the enzyme, unchecked by healthy AAT protein, can unwittingly be aimed at healthy lung tissue. This further situation results in "early-onset emphysema", sometimes called "genetic emphysema". Alpha-1

Antitrypsin Deficiency is an inherited, genetic condition. Its development and role in lung and, less frequently, liver disease is not fully understood.

There is an AAT protein replacement therapy that can help prolong an "alpha" patient's life, although most of us must come to terms with lung transplantation at some point. More than a decade ago Bayer Corporation began manufacturing a replacement therapy for individuals with alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency. The theory was to infuse concentrated amounts of healthy AAT protein on a regular basis. Anecdotal records show that, with certain minimum lung function levels, this therapy is effective in slowing down the deterioration by emphysema. I have been receiving intravenous replacement therapy for nearly 3 years and will continue for as long as the doctors advise. My condition is further complicated by asthma, which was being addressed by three different inhalers scheduled optimally throughout the day. That is, until I started to work with Beth and acupuncture.

Beginning with a specific diagnostic evaluation at the start of each visit,

acupuncture identifies which elements within the bodily systems need enhancing or reducing to maintain overall balance at that time. I've gradually built up my energy reserves (from a "2" to an "8" on a scale of 1-10) through specific acupuncture treatments and dietary considerations. When my system was sufficiently invigorated, showing more potential for maintaining balance, and diagnostics indicated the time was right, Beth began to gently introduce treatments addressing the lungs and the asthma. Gradually, my breathing became less stressed. Within the framework of lung function loss due to the emphysema, there was a noticeable improvement in my breathing. The asthma was face-to-face with my body's ability to heal naturally and normally.

I decided to put the current results of the acupuncture treatments to my own test. I stopped using the asthma-inhalers, but otherwise continued my ordinary daily routines. One of the inhalers was fast-acting and was out of my system within hours. My breathing patterns and performance, moment-by-moment and

task-by-task, were identical to the times I had been using the inhalers. The other two inhalers had systemic characteristics, so I waited more than a month before making any more serious comparisons. The first chance came this past Easter. My wife Pat and I spent the day in New York City, walking for four hours (!) through Central Park with hundreds of other folks enjoying the spring sunshine. My breathing patterns were just as fine as if I had never stopped using the three inhalers. So, the asthma can be addressed. Again, this progress is all within the framework of the deterioration from emphysema, but it is a clear ray of light and hope. My acupuncture treatments with Beth continue. They've added another dimension to my health care and improved the quality of my life.

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