Historians agree that some form of acupuncture has been practiced in China for at least three millennia. In that time, the theory and practice of acupuncture have continually evolved into numerous systems and applications. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, acupuncture-related research and development have continued unabated, with special emphasis on the application of scientific research methods to explain the physiological mechanisms of acupuncture. One of the most spectacular modern applications in this area is the development of acupuncture anesthesia. In acupuncture anesthesia, the insertion and manipulation of acupuncture needles replaces anesthesia drugs. Patients are awake and even talking to their surgeons while undergoing major surgical procedures. The first successful instance of acupuncture anesthesia occurred over fifty years ago, in 1958, in a hospital in Shanghai. After that, hospitals all over China rapidly assimilated and used this breakthrough procedure. Between 1958 and 1989, over two million procedures using acupuncture anesthesia were performed in Chinese hospitals, including operations on the brain, face, neck, chest, abdomen and limbs. Over one hundred different surgical procedures have been conducted using only acupuncture anesthesia, including significant surgeries such as thyroidectomy, hysterectomy, heart surgery, and subtotal gastrectomy. By the 1970’s, acupuncture anesthesia had become part of popular culture in China, featuring in numerous documentaries, newspaper and magazine articles, and television programs. In the West, awareness of acupuncture anesthesia gained ground in the wake of President Nixon’s visit to Beijing in 1972.

The analgesic effect of acupuncture is accomplished through the production and regulation of neurotransmitters in the central nervous system. When acupuncture needles are inserted into specific acupoints on the skin, nerve fibers in the underlying muscle are stimulated. This stimulation sends impulses to the spinal cord, activating the spinal cord, midbrain and hypothalamus-pituitary complex to produce neurotransmitters. The spinal cord blocks incoming pain messages by means of neurotransmitters such as enkephalin and dynorphin. The midbrain uses enkephalin to activate the raphe descending system to inhibit spinal cord pain transmission. In the hypothalamus-pituitary center, the pituitary gland releases ß-endorphin into the blood and cerebrospinal fluid to cause analgesia. Nerve cell extensions from the hypothalamus to the midbrain stimulate the midbrain’s production of ß-endorphin, which activates the descending analgesia system. The discovery and development of acupuncture anesthesia is a remarkable chapter in the ongoing story of Chinese medicine. Scientific research into the effects and applications of acupuncture are now being conducted in countries around the world. Although acupuncture is an ancient treatment modality, it continues to provide a seemingly inexhaustible supply of avenues for exploration.
Tales from AAAOM Student Interns

Tricia Mattson: In our Acupuncture Techniques class, we learned a number of needle manipulations. My personal favorite is a technique called White Tiger Shakes Its Head. It is used to reduce "excess" conditions, such as pain, high fever, chills, mania, etc. To perform White Tiger, the acupuncturist moves the needle from side to side. This opens the hole, which allows the excess to leave the body. In practice, I used the technique on a patient with low back and hip pain for about ten years, following rounds of treatment for breast cancer. She reported experiencing a sensation moving up her back as I shook the needle from lateral to medial at BL 53 (in the lower back), as well as feeling coolness in the area. I love using this technique for several reasons. First, it empowers me to better help patients. Next, it creates strong sensations that patients can recognize, which strengthens their belief in acupuncture. Last, I like that it is a "hands-on" technique, like cupping, where I have a chance to stay with the client, give them special treatment, and let them feel they are "getting their money’s worth."

Dan McGough: In Point Location class we learn the 361 meridian points and 50+ extra points. In clinical practice we also learn that there are about 36 acupoints which we rely on again and again because they are highly effective in treating most of the conditions we see. Initially I was able to get by using a small number of points for many situations. However, as I gained experience and was confronted with subtle and complex symptoms, I found myself going back to the books to find points tailored to specific situations. Tianfu (LU 3), on the Lung meridian, was such a point. Its function is to clear Lung heat, descend Lung Qi, cool Blood and stop bleeding. An additional function is to calm the Po, or corporeal soul. Po resides in the Lung, and is considered to govern sensation, feeling, hearing and sight. Emotional stress such as worry and frustration easily knots Po, resulting in Lung Qi stagnation. A patient I was treating mentioned "uncontrollable crying" among her other symptoms. Tears would flow for no apparent reason, especially at night. As I tried to help her, my research brought me back to Tianfu - a point I hadn’t really thought about since Point Location class. It proved very effective in settling down my patient. After three treatments including this point, the patient reported a greater feeling of inner calm. One translation of Tianfu is "heavenly residence." This name expresses the positive results I have had with this point in my clinic practice.

Rhea Dykoski: I have had great success combining acupuncture with moxibustion on patients with traumatic injuries. (Moxibustion is the technique of applying local warmth to an acupuncture point by burning a processed form of the artemesia plant on or near the acupuncture point. A moxa stick is made of compressed moxa wrapped in paper and looks like a cigar.) Recently, I saw a woman who was recovering from a surgical procedure with wounds on her entire legs from one week earlier. First I inserted needles on the knees and feet, then applied a moxa stick an inch or two over both legs for ten minutes until the skin appeared slightly red. The patient reported her legs felt significantly better after the treatment, and after only two weeks she told me, "I feel like dancing!" A second patient suffered with severe back pain for four years and was in danger of not being able to work anymore. After two months of treatments with acupuncture and moxibustion her pain was completely gone and she has continued to be pain free. She said it was a "true success story."

Shane Berquist: A patient came in with a loud, barking, dry cough with profuse yellow phlegm. She was also short of breath and fatigued, with tongue and pulse showing a condition of excess heat in the body. In this case, rising fire overwhelmed the Lung’s ability to receive and descend Clear Qi, resulting in a loud barking cough and dyspnea. Rising heat also disrupted the Lung’s ability to disperse and descend Food Essence, Water Essence and Clear Qi to the rest of the body, resulting in fatigue, pooling of fluids in the Lungs, and condensation of the Lung fluids into thick yellow phlegm. To clear heat from the Lungs, I used acupoints LI 4, Li 11, and SJ 5. I chose ST 40 and SP 9 to resolve phlegm; SJ 4 and LU 5 to nourish Lung Yin; and LU 7 to reorder the Lung’s Qi dynamic. After a single acupuncture treatment, the patient reported a significant reduction in all her symptoms.
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When patients go to see an acupuncturist for low back pain, it often happens that the treatment will include both acupuncture and the application of an herbal paste to the painful area. First, the practitioner will press the painful area to find the most tender spot, which will be pricked with a small lancet to draw blood. Then a capsule of white powder will be opened and moistened with alcohol, and the paste will be applied to the pricked area and covered with an herbal patch.

The capsule contains an herbal formula called Yunnan Baiyao: “white herb from Yunnan Province.” The formula became known throughout China during the war against the Japanese invasion of 1931-1945, because all the soldiers from Yunnan Province carried a bag of the white powder in their battle gear. Soldiers from other provinces saw that when a soldier from a Yunnan division was hurt, he or other people quickly poured a white powder over the wound, miraculously causing the bleeding to stop and enabling the wounded soldier to return to the battlefield immediately. Thirty years later, during the war in Vietnam, American soldiers often found bags of white powder on dead Viet Cong soldiers. At first they thought it was heroin, but eventually they found out it was Yunnan Baiyao.

Originally Yunnan Baiyao was a secret formula, just like the recipe for Coca Cola, and it was said that only two people in the entire world knew the exact ingredients. Developed about ninety years ago by Dr. Qu Huanzhang, a traditional Chinese medicine practitioner from Yunnan Province, Yunnan Baiyao gained wide recognition for its high degree of effectiveness in the treatment of traumatic injuries. Scientists who have researched Yunnan Baiyao over the past several decades found that it can markedly shorten blood coagulation times, greatly improve circulation in the smaller blood vessels, reduce the incidence of embolism, control inflammation, enhance blood supply to the heart, improve immunity, and inhibit cancer. The main ingredient in the Yunnan Baiyao formula is a Chinese herb called San Qi. In TCM practice, San Qi is used to effectively resolve stagnant blood, relieve pain, promote blood flow, and stop bleeding.

Yunnan Baiyao is available in several forms, with capsules and powders being the most popular. Capsules can be taken orally to treat internal blood stagnation or bleeding issues, such as excessive bleeding with menstrual periods or soft tissue injuries from trauma. The powder can be applied directly to wounds and injuries to stop bleeding, subdue swelling and relieve pain. The powder can also be applied as described in the first paragraph to treat painful muscles, tendons and ligaments. This treatment is so effective that practitioners can see a major difference between using acupuncture alone and combining acupuncture with Yunnan Baiyao. The following case of a patient I treated recently illustrates how successful this therapy can be.

When John came to see me he reported low back pain for three weeks, severe enough to affect his daily activities. The pain was mostly on the left side, radiating down the lateral and posterior aspect of the left leg. He was not only in pain, he was extremely frustrated because he was due to depart in five days on a trip to southeast Asia which had been booked for a long time. He was afraid that he would either have to cancel the trip or be in misery the whole time. After examining him, I said there was a good chance we could get rid of the pain before his trip. I inserted acupuncture needles in the lower back and the affected leg, and attached an electric stimulation machine to the needles at BL 40 and the tender spot in the lower back. After twenty minutes I removed all the needles and applied Yunnan Baiyao to the tender spot. As soon as John got off the treatment table, he reported feeling better. I told him he should come in for a follow-up treatment in two days.

Two days later, John appeared in the clinic with a bouquet of beautiful flowers for the clinic staff and a big smile. He said he was pain-free and could take the trip he had been looking forward to for so long.
People who are just beginning to learn about acupuncture usually think that the essential skill is knowing where the acupoints are and which acupoints to stimulate, and that needling technique is just a matter of poking a needle into the skin and leaving it there for a certain amount of time. While a thorough knowledge of the function and location of acupoints is foundational to the practice of acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine, no one should underestimate the importance of applying appropriate needling techniques. A proficient acupuncturist will be familiar with literally hundreds of manipulation techniques, and also will take into consideration such aspects of needling as depth, direction, retention time, sequence, and point location.

Specific manipulation techniques often have descriptive names such as "Green Dragon Swings Its Tail" or "Red Phoenix Meeting the Source." In this article, I will describe a technique called "Setting Fire to the Mountain" (Shao Shan Huo), which is one of the compound reinforcing needling techniques. It is an extremely effective method for warming Yang Qi and tonifying deficiency, and is successful in treating conditions such as dysmenorrhea, infertility, osteoarthritis, and paralysis. This technique was first described by Hanqing Dou in his book, *Zhen Jing Zhi Nan (Guide to Acupuncture Classics)* in the Jin Dynasty (1115–1234 C.E.). According to TCM theory, reinforcing techniques work by "recruiting" defensive Yang Qi from the superficial level and leading it down to the nutritive level.

A fundamental concept in regard to reinforcing and reducing techniques is that each acupoint has three depth levels. The upper one-third of the point is the "Heaven" section; the middle one-third is the "Human" section, and the deepest section of the point is the "Earth" part. The needle is first inserted to the most superficial level under the skin. It is then retracted or lifted slowly up and thrust rapidly back to its position nine times in succession, while the practitioner twists the needle clockwise on the downstroke. The needle is then advanced to the middle depth and nine more lifting-and-thrusting maneuvers are performed. Finally, the process is repeated at the deepest level, after which the needle is retracted to the "Heaven" position. This is one course of treatment. Generally, three courses of treatment are done in a row to obtain results. The desired therapeutic result is for the area around the acupoint to feel warm, or even for the whole body to feel warm. If the patient does not respond to the initial procedure, the whole cycle may be repeated several times. When the treated area feels warm, the needle is withdrawn and the point closed. This technique should only be used in places where there is a cushion of muscle tissue beneath the acupoint.

There are several considerations in choosing the best acupoint to needle. If the patient suffers from a general deficiency, the practitioner should choose the acupoint in the affected area which has the strongest function to access and circulate Vital Qi. If it is a local problem, the practitioner may choose the most tender, or "Ashi" point. The following example of a recent patient of mine is a good illustration of how to apply this technique successfully. A 65-year-old woman came to see me with a two-year history of knee pain. By the time she came to the clinic, she was not able to walk very far without experiencing severe pain. In her case, I chose ST 36 and an Ashi point, and used Setting Fire to the Mountain technique on both points. ST 36 (Zu San Li) is an important strengthening point, which has the function of tonifying Qi and Blood. During the manipulation, she felt warmth in the knee and whole leg, which made her feel relaxed and comfortable. After the first treatment, the pain was reduced greatly. After another five treatments, she could walk upstairs and the pain was gone completely.
Mapping the Brain with Acupuncture

By Changzhen Gong, Ph.D.

All medical systems employ two basic ways of looking at the body: the structure or morphology of the body, and the function or physiology of the body. Any systematic way of looking at the structure or function of a living organism can be called a "map" of that organism. Beginning 3,000 years ago, Chinese medicine practitioners found a way to explain how the body works by mapping an interconnected network of channels, or meridians, which carry vital energy throughout the structure of the body. Meridian pathways flow along the surface of the body, and also connect all the internal organs to each other and to the surface meridians. The ancient Chinese mapmakers of the human body also noted specific places on the superficial meridians where the body’s energy could be accessed for therapeutic results: the acupuncture points.

There are approximately 360 acupuncture points along the meridian system, and each acupoint is given an individual name, such as Tianzhu ("celestial pillar") or Shen Men ("spirit’s gate"). These names often sound poetic to western ears, but they are essentially practical: they denote either the location or the therapeutic function of the point. In this way, Chinese scholars and practitioners plotted a memorable landscape of the body which creates associative patterns in the acupuncturist’s mind and provides a subtle and dynamic context for achieving therapeutic results.

In the West, physicians began by diagramming various components of the body: the bones of the skeleton, the internal organs, the circulatory system, etc. As medical science progressed, attention focused on the mechanisms of physiology, such as hormones, neurotransmitters, the immune system, and genetics. Understanding the human brain and how it works has been a goal of scientists and medical researchers for several hundred years, but it has only been in the last few decades that significant breakthroughs in unraveling the mystery of the brain have been made. Electrodes placed on brain tissues gave early researchers clues as to the function of various brain structures. Analysis of chemicals such as dopamine and serotonin provided evidence of the function of neurotransmitters. Computerized axial tomography (CAT) scans showed the anatomical structures of the brain in detail. Most recently, functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) technology has made it possible to view the brain in action. Functional magnetic resonance imaging relies on the paramagnetic properties of oxygenated and deoxygenated hemoglobin to see images of changing blood flow in the brain associated with neural activity. This allows images to be generated that reflect which brain structures are activated by different types of stimulation.

In China, scientists began to use the new tool of fMRI technology to investigate the age-old technique of acupuncture, by observing the brain's response to acupuncture stimulation. This line of research has connected the structural/functional landscape of acupuncture points with the structural/functional landscape of the brain. A definite link has been established between acupoints with specific therapeutic functions and areas of the brain which correspond to these functions. A study done by Li, et al. (Magnetic Resonance Imaging 22, 2004), found a connection between analgesic acupuncture points and pain-related brain structures. Stimulation of acupoints LI 4 and LI 10 on the arm, and acupoints GB 39 and GB 34 on the leg, which are often used to relieve painful musculo-skeletal conditions, showed activation over the right and left premotor areas of the brain. This study supported the existence of sensorimotor-implicated acupoints which, when stimulated, activate sensory and motor cortices of the brain. Siedentopf, et al., found that applying laser acupuncture to Zhiyin (BL 67), which is used for ophthalmic disorders, activates the cuneus and medial occipital gyrus areas of the brain, which are related to visual function.

fMRI technology opens lines of research not only into the effect of stimulating specific acupoints, but also the effect that various needling techniques can produce in the brain. Acupuncture needle techniques such as needle rotation, deep vs. shallow needling, and duration of acupuncture are being investigated, as well as the effect of electrical acupuncture vs. manual acupuncture. A study by Napadow, et al., compared stimulation of Zu San Li (ST 36) with manual acupuncture, low-frequency electroacupuncture, and high-frequency electroacupuncture. Both manual acupuncture and electroacupuncture at ST 36 activated the anterior insula and deactivated limbic and paralimbic brain structures including the amygdala and hippocampus. However, only electroacupuncture activated the anterior middle cingulated cortex, and only low-frequency electroacupuncture activated the pontine raphe area.

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Another intriguing aspect of fMRI research is the discovery of functional network connectivity in the brain, and the fact that stimulation of acupoints can activate this connectivity. Functional connectivity describes the interdependence of regions of the brain which are functionally related and connected. The research team of Fang, et al., investigated the effect of using combinations of acupoints on brain function. They found that using the classic point combination of Hegu (LI 4), Zu San Li (ST 36), Taichong (LR 3), Xingjian (LR 2), and Neiting (ST 44) resulted in modulation of the brain's limbic-paralimbic-neocortical network. The research team of Hui, et al., discovered that needling Zu San Li (ST 36) modulated neural activity at multiple levels of the cerebro-cerebellar and limbic system.

The primary purpose of acupuncture is to treat health conditions and disease. Therefore, a major avenue of fMRI research involves studying brain response to acupuncture which is being applied to specific health problems. For example, a study by Napadow, et al., established functional connectivity between the hypothalamus and the amygdala in response to stimulation of Hegu (LI 4) for carpal tunnel syndrome. Ongoing fMRI research into the effect of acupuncture stimulation on health conditions and pathologies includes studies on spastic cerebral palsy, Alzheimer's disease, visual impairment, cervical spinal cord injury, stroke, vascular dementia, addictions, repetitive strain injury, and musculoskeletal disease.

Acupuncture research, like acupuncture practice, provides us with a treasure trove of information and useful results. The millennia-old meridian and acupoint maps of the body are being decoded by cutting-edge technology. As scientists continue to explore the many landscapes of the human body, acupuncture practitioners may someday witness the seamless convergence of an ancient healing art into modern medicine.

Legends of Chinese Medicine
By Qin Chu, TCMD, Ph.D., L.Ac.

In the days of the Song Dynasty in China (960–1279 C.E.), there lived a famous scholar-physician named Wenbo Xu. Well-educated scholars formed the backbone of the civil service in China, so Wenbo Xu was a high-ranking official in the Emperor’s entourage, as well as being a renowned doctor. The Emperor served was a strong and powerful leader, but he was also a cruel, autocratic man.

One day Wenbo accompanied the Emperor on a sightseeing trip beyond the grounds of the royal palace. On the road they encountered a peasant woman in an advanced stage of pregnancy. The Emperor, who amused himself by studying medicine with Wenbo, decided to practice his pulse-diagnosis skills on the woman, believing that he could predict the sex of the unborn child by reading her pulse correctly. The Emperor read the pulse of the nervous woman and determined that her child would be a girl. When Wenbo read the woman’s pulse he said, "No. There are two babies inside her: one is a boy, the other a girl."

The Emperor did not like to be contradicted, and immediately lost his temper. In his desire to prove himself right and Wenbo wrong, he ordered his bodyguards to cut the woman open, remove the baby and see what sex it was. Wenbo, horrified by the cruelty of this, quickly began to persuade the Emperor that he, Wenbo, could cause the woman to go into labor and deliver her babies on the spot. The Emperor, curious to see if Wenbo could do this, agreed to wait.

Reassuring the terrified woman that she would come through her ordeal safely, Wenbo removed two acupuncture needles from his bag. He placed one needle above her ankle in the acupoint San Yin Jiao (SP 6) on the foot Taiyin meridian, and the other needle next to her thumb (Hegu LI 4) on the hand Yangming meridian. He began to manipulate the needles strongly, using the reducing method on the foot point and the tonifying method on the hand point. The woman went into labor and delivered her babies within about an hour. Wenbo was right: the babies were a boy and a girl.

The events in this story happened a thousand years ago, but the two acupuncture points that Wenbo needled then are still used every day to help deliver babies. Additionally, a point on the outside of the little toe (Zhiyin BL 67) is commonly used to promote labor and deliver retained placenta; and when combined with moxibustion, it can help correct malpositioned fetus. It should be further noted, though, that these points are contraindicated during pregnancy to avoid unintended abortion. Additional points likewise contraindicated during pregnancy include one on top of the shoulder (Jianjing GB 21) and local abdominal points.
The Mini-Worlds of Micro-Acupuncture

By Brian Grosam, Ph.D., TCMD, L.Ac.

Acupuncture has developed over thousands of years to become an elaborate system of channel pathways connecting virtually the entire body. With acupuncture always fine-tuning itself, today it is developing into exciting new realms of micro-acupuncture systems. These new systems are, as the name implies, "micro-systems" found all over the body. Micro-systems take a small anatomical portion of the body, for instance the ear, hand, foot, or scalp, and develop a small-scale model of the body or a system of acupuncture points in that circumscribed area. The acupoints in the mini-model are then applied to the whole body, and the whole body is treated from that small area. Many of these new micro-acupuncture systems are now successfully being used as independent treatment modalities, or in conjunction with other traditional Chinese medicine modalities.

By far the most popular micro-system in use today is ear (auricular) acupuncture. The most interesting part of ear acupuncture is the map itself that is superimposed on the ear. The map is of a baby in utero, which is pictured upside-down, so the points to treat the head are found on the earlobe, points for the internal organs in the center and the sex organs and lower limbs are found along the top of the ear. Auricular acupuncture is in common use today, and some acupuncturists are so skilled in this technique that ear points are their sole treatment method. An American organization, the National Acupuncture Detoxification Association (NADA), has developed a protocol based on the ear acupuncture model which is used to treat post-traumatic stress disorder, addictions, and other emotional disorders.

Another widely-used system is scalp acupuncture, developed to stimulate brain cortex functions by needling areas along the scalp that pertain to specific areas of the brain, such as the motor and sensory cortices. Scalp acupuncture is used to treat a variety of disorders and is the preferred treatment method for many types of neurological disorders, such as stroke and paralysis.

Hand acupuncture is extremely popular in Korea, where it has been refined into an elaborate and extensive system. The Korean hand model shows 345 individual points, which are almost as many as the 365 whole-body points described by traditional Chinese medicine!

Abdominal acupuncture, an up-and-coming micro-system, is centered around the umbilicus (belly button) and based on the TCM theory that the umbilicus is the root of the body. It is also loosely based on the Ba Gua (Eight Diagrams) system which is familiar to students of Feng Shui. It is unique in that it utilizes different depths of the abdominal acupoints to treat a variety of ailments. Needling at the superficial level (Heaven Level) of the abdominal acupoints treats musculo-skeletal disorders throughout the body. Needling at the mid-level (Human Level) of a point treats psychological and emotional disorders. And when the needles are inserted into the deep-level tissue closer to the organs (Earth Level), yes, they treat internal-organ disorders.

Some previously-developed systems have faded from use, while others have been revamped into entirely new systems of treatment. One example is face acupuncture, which was developed as a whole-body treatment system like the others, and is still found in many acupuncture textbooks. Using face acupuncture as a micro-system has lost popularity, but many of its core principles are being utilized in facial rejuvenation acupuncture, a safe, low-cost and effective way to treat facial wrinkles and enhance the complexion.

Treating general health problems by means of the feet is an idea which has surfaced in a number of cultures around the world. One popular technique is reflexology, a pressure point system along the soles of the feet to diagnose and treat many health problems of the body. In China a foot acupuncture micro-system was devised, but foot reflexology is much more widely practiced. There are foot clinics throughout China called "Zu Liao" (literally translated as "foot treatment"). These clinics have fine-tuned foot reflexology into a very relaxing and inexpensive treatment for a culture that is always walking.

There are many other less-common micro-systems that are fading from common practice such as eye acupuncture, a truly amazing system that has adopted needling around the eye to treat complicated disorders. However this system has two strikes against it: it is technically challenging; and most patients, given a choice, say, "No, thank you - let's try something else." Another micro-system, large or long bone acupuncture, adopts a head-to-toe map superimposed on long bones such as the femur or metacarpal bones of the hand. Human curiosity and the drive to create improved health care treatments will surely result in even more micro-systems of acupuncture being developed and improved on in the future.
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Getting on Patients' Nerves

By Sarah DeLaForest, Student Intern

In the eighteen months that I have been a clinic intern, there are certain acupuncture points and systems which I have come to rely on for their consistent therapeutic effect. Three specific categories of acupuncture points which stand out to me for their effectiveness and broad application are the Jiaji, Ba Liao, and scalp acupuncture points. Jiaji points are found on the back, about one-half inch lateral to the inferior end of the spinous processes of the vertebrae. The eight Ba Liao points are located in the foramina of the sacrum, four on each side. Scalp acupuncture points are part of the scalp micro-system. Because these points directly stimulate cranial and spinal nerves, it is no surprise that they are useful to treat a wide variety of neurological conditions. Even so, I continue to be amazed by the degree of success which they have brought me.

The standard treatment procedure in clinic is to evaluate the patient's symptoms from a traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) perspective, and then decide which acupuncture points to use based on the TCM diagnosis. After a while, I found that if I also formulated my treatment plan based on the biomedical aspects of the patient's health condition, I got much better results. My initial experience with this approach came when I was treating multiple sclerosis (MS) patients in the MS clinic. MS is a disease which attacks the myelin sheath surrounding nerve cells, and results in progressive degeneration of the nerve tissue. At this point there is no "cure" for MS, but there is good evidence that acupuncture can have a positive effect on various symptoms from which MS patients suffer.

The main treatment protocol for MS patients is to use scalp acupuncture, which directly impacts cranial nerves. When I saw how much benefit my MS patients got from scalp acupuncture, I became intrigued by the idea of using acupuncture to stimulate the central nervous system. Thereafter, whenever a patient was not making much progress, I would consider how the patient's condition may be related to the nervous system and how I could directly affect their physiology in that way.

For example, a patient came in complaining of axillary hyperhidrosis (excessive sweating). After two months of treatment showed minimal improvement in the patient's condition, I did a bit of research to find which spinal nerve roots control axillary sweating, and then needled those Jiaji points. At that point, the patient improved dramatically.

Approximately 75% of patients that I have treated for pain conditions using Jiaji, Ba Liao or scalp acupuncture points have had significant improvement in the quality of their lives. Before my regular inclusion of these points, this was not the case. Other examples of success with this approach include the following cases:

An 80 year-old man who had been diagnosed with benign prostatic hyperplasia and complained of urinary hesitancy and dribbling. He declared himself "90% back to normal" after six weeks of Ba Liao treatments, given once per week.

A 33 year-old female, diagnosed with "degenerative disc disease" of ten years' duration, which was so painful that her entire body hurt and she felt nauseated constantly. After two treatments of thoracic and lumbar Jiaji, the nausea disappeared and her pain level began decreasing. After three months of treatments, she felt well enough to reduce her treatments to once per month for maintenance.

A 35 year-old male with debilitating anxiety and seizures following a motor vehicle accident. I focused my treatments on scalp acupuncture points to control the seizures. Even before the seizures came under control, his anxiety and panic attacks completely resolved. Ten weeks later, he was seizure-free and able to drive again.

The Intern Clinic at our Roseville location is an inexpensive way to invest in your health. Supervised by our faculty, you will receive high quality treatments from 3rd- and 4th-year interns. In return, you will assist interns in gaining valuable first-hand clinical experience. Treatments may include acupuncture, herbal medicine, Tuina massage, dietary recommendations, and even Qi Gong. Faculty members carefully advise and review all patient diagnoses, prescriptions, and follow-up visits to ensure the most effective treatments. Treatments from student interns are generally $32 per session, but a coupon is available on the last page of this newsletter to print out and bring along with you (or simply reference) for a $16 introductory treatment.

Read more about AAAOM student intern experiences on page 2 of this newsletter.
By Yifan Liu, TCMD, Ph.D., L.Ac.

Food as Medicine: Recipes for Spring

After a long, cold winter, such as we had this year, Minnesotans can benefit from the wisdom of traditional Chinese medicine by preparing healthful dishes based on the Chinese practice of dietary therapy. The recipes presented below can help to throw off the effects of winter and prepare us to enter the spring season.

In traditional Chinese medicine theory, pathogenic conditions are associated with every season. Heat precipitates disease in summer; cold precipitates disease in winter; dryness afflicts us in the fall. Wind is the predominant pathogen in spring, but it often combines with cold or heat pathogens and facilitates their invasion of the human body. Spring can be a particularly difficult season healthwise, if the weather is very windy and changeable, with abrupt fluctuations of heat and cold. If we cannot adapt to the changing climate in spring, we may be susceptible to wind-driven seasonal health problems such as flu, pneumonia, bronchitis, allergy flare-ups, or a relapse of chronic diseases.

According to the Five Element theory of traditional Chinese medicine, each season is associated with an element, an internal organ, a taste, and a color. Spring is associated with the element of Wood, the Liver, a sour taste, and the color green. Late summer is associated with the element of Earth, the Spleen, a sweet taste, and the color yellow. When a body is in harmony, the Liver "controls" the Spleen, but does not overwhelm it. However, the strong winds of spring can stimulate the Liver’s normal energy to the point where it can act too strongly on the Spleen and cause disharmony of the Spleen’s function. This is especially likely to happen if the Spleen is already weak or out of balance, and can result in stomach pain, acid regurgitation, stomach distention, constipation/diarrhea, and other digestive disorders. This is diagnosed by TCM as a Disharmony of Liver and Spleen.

In TCM dietary therapy, each food has a taste (sour, bitter, sweet, acrid and salty), a nature (hot, warm, neutral, cool and cold), and specific internal organs it affects. Disharmonies and disease conditions are addressed by eating foods which will strengthen weak organs or abate over-acting organs. In the spring, people with digestive disorders should reduce the intake of sour flavors (Liver) and increase intake of sweet flavors (Spleen) in order to calm the Liver, strengthen the Spleen, and disperse the wind pathogen from the body. Pungent or acrid flavors are also advised because they belong to the fall season and act to control the Liver. Adding some bitter-tasting foods to the spring diet may not be pleasant, but the bitter taste can nourish the Spleen. When food is used as medicine in China, it often involves adding medicinal herbs to foods that have a therapeutic taste or nature.

Wind-Expelling Pork Bone Soup

This soup is good for those who, in a damp spring season, suffer from pain and stiffness in the lower back, and arthritis pain in the joints. The ingredients promote blood circulation, unblock the meridians, expel wind-dampness, and soothe pain. Caution: This soup is warm in nature. People who have inflammatory-type arthritis or a fever should not take it.

Ingredients:
10g Qin Jiao (Gentiana macrophylla root: bitter taste)
10g Fang Feng (Ledebouriella root: acrid taste)
10g Fresh ginger root (Zingiber officinale: acrid taste)
50g Black beans (sweet taste)
300g Pork bones
To taste: rice wine, white pepper, fresh coriander, salt.

Method:
1. Rinse the first 3 ingredients and put them in a cooking pouch. Pre-soak the black beans for 30–60 minutes. Blanch the pork bones in boiling water for 30 seconds.
2. Place the pouch, beans and bones into a pot with approximately 8 cups of water. Boil until the black beans are tender.
3. Before serving, season the soup to taste with salt, white pepper, rice wine and coriander leaves (xiang cai).
4. Discard the ingredients in the cooking pouch and serve.

Sweet Rice Porridge with Job’s Tears

This porridge benefits those diagnosed with Liver Spleen Disharmony. Most of the ingredients are sweet and nourish the Spleen, while Bo He (mint) is acrid and controls the Liver.

Ingredients:
50g Yi Yi Ren (Coix seed, Job’s tears: sweet)
50g Bai Bian Dou (Hyacinth bean: sweet)
50g Da Zao (Chinese date: sweet)
30g Bo He (Mint leaf: acrid)
30g Brown sugar
100g Sweet rice

Method:
1. Pre-soak the first 3 ingredients and put them in a cooking pouch. Pre-soak the black beans for 30–60 minutes. Blanch the pork bones in boiling water for 30 seconds.
2. Place the pouch, beans and bones into a pot with approximately 8 cups of water. Boil until the black beans are tender.
3. Before serving, season the soup to taste with salt, white pepper, rice wine and coriander leaves (xiang cai).
4. Discard the ingredients in the cooking pouch and serve.
**AAAOM Open Houses**

Open Houses for prospective students will be held on July 10th and July 17th from 2-5 p.m. Open House presentations are an excellent opportunity for prospective acupuncture students or anyone who is interested in exploring the field of acupuncture and Oriental medicine to get a lot of information in a short space of time. Read more on page 3, visit AAAOM.edu for full details and to RSVP, or call 651-631-0204 ext. 2 with any questions and to RSVP. We hope to see you there!

**First Day of Fall Trimester**

The first day of classes for 2011’s Fall Trimester will be Tuesday, September 6th. Applications are now being accepted and prospective students are encouraged to register soon. For application information, visit AAAOM.edu or call 651-631-0204 ext. 2. **AAAOM accepts applications year-round for trimesters beginning in September, January, and late April.**

**Tai Chi and Healing Qi Gong Classes Open to the Public**

To cultivate healthy lifestyles and healthy communities, the AAAOM Community Education program includes ongoing 12-week Tai Chi classes on Wednesdays from 6 to 8:30 p.m. beginning September 7th and 10-week Healing Qi Gong classes on Thursdays from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. beginning September 8th. For class and registration information, please call 651-631-0204 ext. 1.

**AAAOM Presents the Class of 2011**

On Saturday, May 21, the American Academy of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine hosted a graduation ceremony for our Class of 2011 (pictured below). AAAOM is proud to honor Mona Abdel-Rahman, Esther Aldrich, Rosemary Britt, Sarah DeLaForest, Rhea Dykoski, Navoung Lim, Kinh Ly, Rachel Nudd, Kathleen Sowada, Daniel Stettler, Travis Young, and Jinan Zheng. Congratulations to all!