



Some Information on Acupuncture

WHAT IS ACUPUNCTURE?

Acupuncture is a treatment that consists in pricking the patient with a special needle. It developed in China about 2,000 years ago. Traditional Chinese acupuncture uses a complicated system of ancient ideas that are not easy for most of us to understand or accept today. However, many modern Western practitioners find that acupuncture can be understood in scientific terms. This makes it easier to use in a Western setting and it is becoming increasingly acceptable here. Many hospitals today offer acupuncture to their patients and the British Medical Acupuncture Society has over 1,200 members. Acupuncture has been used at this practice since 1997. The kind of acupuncture we practise is modern or non-traditional. In practise, this means that only a few needles are generally used and they are left in for only a short time – sometimes just a few seconds! We find that this method is more effective and causes fewer unwanted effects.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

We cannot yet explain this in detail. In many cases the acupuncturist makes use of “trigger points”. These are areas, usually in muscle, that hurt when pressed and cause pain to radiate to other places that may be some distance away from the trigger point. Needling the trigger point can relieve pain in these distant areas, although we do not know exactly how this happens.

Acupuncture has important effects on the way in which the nervous system, glandular system, and probably immune system work, it can therefore be used to treat disorders which are not associated with pain or trigger points, such as asthma (in some cases) or menstrual irregularities.

It is important to understand that acupuncture does have measurable effects on the body even though we can't explain them all in detail. You don't have to believe in it for it to work!

WHAT DISEASES CAN BE HELPED BY ACUPUNCTURE?

It is not possible to give a complete list, partly because a lot depends on the individual reaction of the patient. Some people are much better subjects than others, and some don't respond at all.

In general, acupuncture is good for pain, especially pain in the muscles and joints (including some kinds of arthritis). It can also help in a wide range of other disorders, including headaches and migraine, some allergies, painful periods, and ulcerative colitis.