

Equine Acupuncture

TRADITIONAL CHINESE VETERINARY MEDICINE (TCVM)

Definition of Health

Health can be defined as the balance and harmony between an individual and the universe, other individuals, the mind and body, and daily life and diet.

What is Acupuncture?

Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine (TCVM) has four main components: acupuncture, diet, herbal medicine and Tui-na (massage). Acupuncture is the stimulation of acupuncture points called acupoints using tiny needles to reestablish the flow of the Qi. Each acupoint has a unique location and physiological effect. Acupoints can be used for diagnosis and treatment of disease.

What is Qi?

Qi (pronounced “chee”) is the vital energy or vital force that gives life. The Qi constantly flows throughout our body using meridians or channels, keeping a balance between them. There are two opposite forms of Qi: Yin and Yang. Blockage of this flow or lack of Qi causes disease.

What is a Channel or Meridian?

A channel or meridian is where Qi flows inside of us. Acupuncturists commonly use 12 Regular Channels and 2 Extraordinary Channels. Each regular meridian is related to specific paired organs: lung to large intestine, heart to small intestine, spleen to stomach, liver to gallbladder, as well as kidneys to bladder. The two extraordinary channels are Governing Vessel (GV) and Conception Vessels (CV). This network of channels is called the Jing-Luo system.

Nomenclature of Meridians

Acupuncture was developed in ancient China over 4,000 years ago. Jia Gu Wen, was the first Chinese written language developed during the Xia-Shang dynasty (2070-1046 BC). The original text books of acupuncture were written using Chinese characters. As acupuncture spread around the world these characters were translated “literally” into different languages. For example “gallbladder” does not necessarily refer to the organ that stores bile nor “spleen” to the organ that stores blood. The Meridians Spleen-Stomach are the equivalent to our “gastrointestinal” system.

What does the Tai Ji symbol mean?

The Tai Ji Symbol represents the continuous and balanced flow of the Qi between two alternate poles: Yin and Yang. It also reminds us that nothing is absolute because there is Yin within Yang and Yang within Yin.



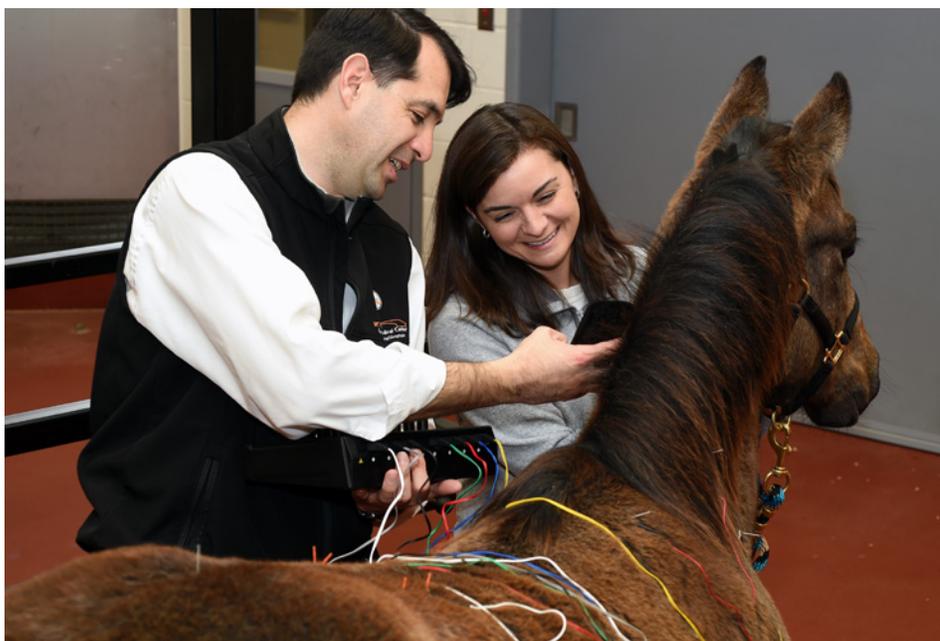
Yin-Yang and Five Elements

The Yin-Yang and the Five Elements system are the conceptual foundation of TCVM.

Everything can be described as a relationship between polar opposites (Yin-Yang): day/night, hot/cold, excess/deficiency, exterior/interior/, and health/disease. It is the comparison between opposites that creates the meaning for these.

Five elements constitute the universe: Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water. Each element is linked to an organ, for example wood is to the liver, fire is to the heart, etc. TCVM describes the relationship between the body and its internal organs as well as the body and nature.

The Yin-Yang and Five Elements theory guide clinical diagnosis and treatment.



Equine Acupuncture

How do you know that the needle is in the correct acupoint?

The patient experiences different sensations when a needle is inserted: twitching, numbness, relaxation, etc. This sensation is called “De-Qi” and when present it means that an acupoint has been stimulated. This reaction varies from very strong to very weak depending on the individual. The sensation then travels along the meridian, re-establishes the flow of the Qi, and returns the body to balance.

What if an acupoint can't be needled?

There are 361 acupoints in humans and 173 in animals. Each meridian has multiple acupoints, for example the bladder meridian has 67 points. There are always multiple acupoints on the same meridian or complementary meridian that can be stimulated to achieve the desired effect.

Does acupuncture hurt?

No! Acupuncture is not painful because acupuncturists use tiny needles to stimulate the acupoints. Careful observation of the “de-Qi” reaction on each patient determines the number, the size and the length of the needles that should be used.

How soon can we expect some results?

Some results can be seen immediately but others will require several treatments. We recommend a minimum of 3 to 5 treatments 1-2 weeks apart for chronic conditions before we can expect to see results.

How long does the treatment last?

Treatments can be done daily, weekly, monthly or even further apart depending on the severity and chronicity of the condition. Once the normal balance and flow of the Qi has been reestablished the effects will last longer.

What are the goals of acupuncture methods?

By using several modalities such as dry needle, electro-acupuncture, aqua-acupuncture, moxibustion, etc. and

depending on the severity and chronicity of the disease the goal is always to reestablish the normal flow of the Qi and reestablish balance.

Is acupuncture safe?

Yes! Acupuncture in general is safe with few side effects. Acupuncture is a natural form of medicine that does not oppose conventional medicine; it actually complements it.

How long does each treatment take?

The first session takes on average one and a half hours. Successive sessions take between 20 to 45 minutes depending on the number of needles and the chosen modality.

When is acupuncture indicated?

Acupuncture can be indicated for the treatment and/or management of multiple conditions such as muscle soreness, back pain, laryngeal hemiplegia, facial and radial nerve paralysis, anhidrosis, uveitis, infertility, and behavioral problems. It is also indicated for performance enhancement, general well-being and preventative care.

Cautions and Contraindications of Acupuncture

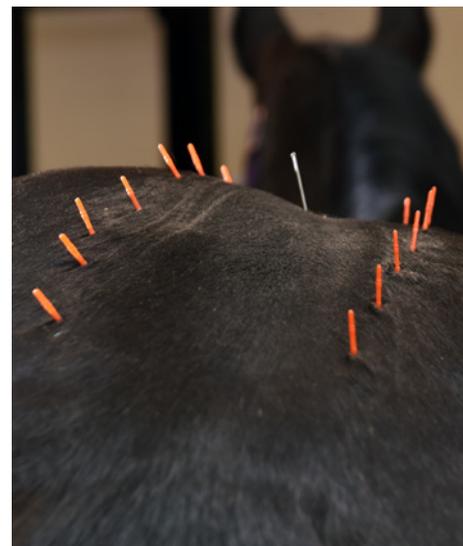
Acupuncture should be used with caution, and may be contraindicated in the following conditions: infectious diseases, tumors, open wounds, pregnancy, fractures, as well as any condition that requires surgery.

What if one or more needles fall off before the treatment is completed?

Once the needle is inserted the point is considered “treated.” It is not a problem if one or more needles are removed or fall off because the rest of the needles will continue to stimulate the acupoints and achieve the effect.

Why is Acupuncture combined with Herbal Medicine?

Many acupuncturists choose to combine acupuncture with Herbal medicine. The use of herbs enhances the effectiveness of acupuncture.



Is there any scientific evidence on how acupuncture works?

Acupuncture is an ancient “evidence-based medicine,” thus, the benefits of the practice of acupuncture have been seen and recorded for several thousands of years. It is not until recently that research using the rigorous scientific method has been done to demonstrate how it works and validate its benefits. The US National Library of Medicine Institute of Health (www.pubmed.gov) has a total of 21,696 articles regarding acupuncture and 341 animal-specific articles as of December 2014.

For more information:

UTCVM VETERINARY MEDICAL CENTER

vetmed.tennessee.edu/vmc/EquineHospital



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World Association of Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine

wacvm.org