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LIFE HEALTH

Needles hit the spot for pain



By Melissa Carr, Special to 24 hours
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Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Day is less well-known than the other important October days of Thanksgiving and Halloween. Taking place on Oct. 24, it is, however, much healthier for you. AOM Day was started in the United States, but is an international day recognized by professional associations, research organizations, and educational institutions around the world.

The goal is to increase public awareness about acupuncture and Oriental medicine. Today, most people have at least heard of acupuncture, and a growing number have tried it, especially in Vancouver and the Lower Mainland. Acupuncture was not always as accepted in Western culture. In fact, though it is thousands of years old, it has only been in North America for a relatively short time.

In 1971, New York Times journalist James Reston traveled to China. Hoping to interview Henry Kissinger in Beijing, he arrived a day too late, but still got the story of his life. As he was being told that he had missed Kissinger and that President Richard Nixon would visit China soon, he felt pangs of pain of an acute appendicitis. Not long after, Reston had his appendix surgically removed. The surgery went well, but he was “in considerable discomfort, it not pain during the second night after the operation,” so a doctor of acupuncture at the hospital inserted three acupuncture needles — one in the outer part of his right elbow and two below his knees. After treatment, his abdominal pressure and distension was relieved and never returned.

This story was the first introduction of acupuncture to many in North America. Not long after, in 1972, China opened its doors to the West for the first time since 1949. Acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine are certainly no longer limited to those with an Asian background. Acupuncture is now regulated in five of Canada’s provinces — British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Quebec, and Newfoundland. B.C. also regulates the use of prescribing Chinese herbs and is the only province to regulate the title of doctor of TCM.

If you have not yet tried acupuncture or TCM, AOM Day offers a reminder to check it out. Best recognized for its ability to treat pain, acupuncture can also help a variety of other health conditions, including digestive issues, fatigue, insomnia, hormonal imbalance and more.

Dr. Melissa Carr is a registered doctor of traditional Chinese medicine, caring for patients in an integrative medicine clinic in Vancouver.

Poll

Have you tried acupuncture?

Friday, October 17, 2014

- ☐ yes
- ☐ no - afraid of needles
- ☐ no - but want to

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