

What is Acupuncture?

What is acupuncture? It is a form of holistic healthcare that is used to prevent and treat certain diseases as well as relieve pain and anesthetize patients for surgery. Research shows that this began in China and has been practiced for more than 5,000 years.

The earliest account of this is found in the book called Nei Jing which in English means the Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine. The contents of this book date somewhere around 200 BC. Back then, they did not use metal needles and instead used those made out of stone, moxibustion and herbs to treat a patient.

Acupuncture prevents and treats diseases by inserting very fine needles into the skin specifically at the anatomic points of the body.

The principle behind this concept is that illnesses occur because there is an imbalance in your life force otherwise known as Qi. It is believed that this flows in 14 channels in the human body known as meridians which branch out to bodily organs and functions. If there is a blockage or obstruction in any of them, this is when you succumb to a disease or an illness.

The imbalance in the Qi may go one way or the other because of Yin and Yang. The person can only be normal if there is harmony between the two which is what acupuncture is trying to achieve. This can only be restored by stimulating these acupuncture points so your Qi can be adjusted, balanced and harmonized.

Apart from using needles, practitioners also use friction, heat, impulses of electromagnetic energy and pressure to stimulate these points in order to balance the movement of energy in the body to reduce one's health.

An example of this is sonopuncture where an ultrasound device that transmits sound waves is applied to these points in the body. Some use a tuning fork and other vibration devices.

Acupressure is another example and here, the fingers are used to relieve the pain. This can be used by itself or with other manual healing techniques.

Impulses of electromagnetic energy are used because our bodies generate tiny but electrical discharges which influence the function, growth and maturity of certain types of cells. By inserting the needles in these areas, it stimulates and alters the neurotransmitters in the body thus making the patient feel better after treatment. This is also sometimes used for diagnosis and testing.

According to the World Health Organization or WHO, here is a list of some illnesses where acupuncture is used. These include acute bronchitis, the common cold, cataract, toothaches, gingivitis, hiccups, ulcers, constipation, diarrhea, headache and migraine, Meniere's disease, osteoarthritis and a lot more. In the US, acupuncture is often used to treat chronic pain conditions and mind body disorders.

But acupuncture is not risk free. Hematoma may develop if the needle punctures a circulatory structure. It is also possible that pneumothorax may occur if the needle is inserted too deep. There is also the risk of HIV and hepatitis if the needle was not properly sterilized.

Now that you know what acupuncture is, you must not forget that it is merely an alternative and not a proper form of medical treatment. This means you should still be examined by a professional in the medical field who can determine the severity of your illness or disease.