

PAIN MANAGEMENT

A Practical Guide for Clinicians

SIXTH EDITION

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ETPS Neuropathic Acupuncture

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FOREWORD

The social and human costs of chronic pain are staggering. During the 20th century, chronic pain has disabled millions of people, costing hundreds of billions of dollars in rehabilitation costs and lost productivity in addition to untold human suffering (Statistics Canada, 1992). According to some statistics, 80% of these payments have been made for patients with neuromyofascial pain. For the future, there is little evidence to suggest that the rate of growth of chronic soft tissue pain conditions will decrease or even plateau.

Today, doctors and patients can choose from a variety of treatments, though surgery and prescription drugs are the most popular avenues in the United States. The major disadvantage associated with drugs or surgery is that they do not always solve the root problems; rather, they mask pain or surgically remove local pathology. Pharmaceuticals occasionally are effective, but can result in unpleasant interactions and side effects to a degree that reduces the quality of life for those who ingest them on a long-term basis. Moreover, the risks associated with drugs and surgery are not always outweighed by the benefits, as many patients actually feel worse.

A number of complementary and alternative modalities (CAMs) have been promoted as solutions to fill the void left by allopathic medicine. However, their relative efficaciousness may be regarded as sporadic. Progress in identifying a broader range of therapeutic benefits of CAMs has been hindered by considerable infighting among different disciplines, to a degree reminiscent of a quest to be the first to race up the hill, plant a flag, and claim victory in a winner-takes-all contest. While natural solutions do offer some relief in the battle

against chronic pain, long-term victory appears elusive when approaching a patient with a single modality or treatment philosophy.

The development of Electro-Therapeutic Point Stimulation (ETPS) therapy represents a turning point in the fight against chronic pain. Where surgery and prescription drugs fall short, ETPS provides nonsurgical, non-invasive treatment of chronic neuromyofascial pain. ETPS does not replace, nor does it dispute the validity of conventional medicinal approaches. Rather, ETPS recognizes that all therapeutic approaches must be examined to determine the most efficacious treatment for the patient. ETPS also recognizes that different therapies produce different responses and that the key to understanding the source of a patient's chronic pain is to perform an overall mechanical and neuropathic analysis of the body. This analysis helps to identify problematic areas that contort the body resulting in asymmetrical posture and motion; physical conditions that ETPS therapy believes can lead to degenerative changes and chronic pain throughout the body.

INTRODUCTION

ETPS neuropathic therapy is a hybrid modality used in the treatment neuromyofascial pain. In its most basic form, ETPS therapy applies brief, staged, concentrated stimulation to points relating to different therapeutic systems. Patient assessments are performed at the end of each stage to determine therapeutic effectiveness. Through a series of systematic and reproducible protocols, the diagnosis and treatment of root causes of soft tissue pain can be completed with a high degree of accuracy.

The theoretical underpinnings of ETPS therapy are based on sound medicine, firmly grounded on the principles of acupuncture, osteopathic trigger points, neuromuscular and neural therapies. As such, the constituent elements of ETPS therapy are not new. Its unique contribution to pain relief however comes from the synthesis of different approaches, combining the therapeutic “pearls” of trigger, motor and acupuncture points with a mechanical analysis of the body. The result is a simple, easy-to-use series of protocols.

By following the recommended protocols, physicians are able to identify which stage(s) is/are most responsible for contributing to a patient’s pain condition. Stages deemed ineffective in producing positive therapeutic responses are eliminated from future treatments. Those stages producing positive responses are examined diagnostically to determine interrelationship(s) with the patient’s condition and are integrated into future protocols.

ETPS therapy does not isolate or treat a pain condition; rather, it is used to determine how the patient’s overall body mechanics and neuropathic/radiculopathic manifestations can be combined with acupuncture and trigger points to produce unique protocols. These protocols bridge many different treatment philosophies to provide therapeutic responses where other modalities fail to achieve successful results. Because it is effective in the diagnosis of root causes of pain, ETPS therapy can serve as an invaluable tool to all types of physicians in their efforts to substantiate current treatment and as an integrative tool for current protocols.

The therapeutic benefits of ETPS are based on four different physiological principles.

1. **Circulation response.** Increasing or decreasing circulation (called “chi” in Eastern therapies) can benefit the patient in a manner similar to the application of heat (vasodilation) and ice (vasoconstriction) in Western medicine.
2. **Autonomic/parasympathetic response.** A medium for chronic pain, the Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) covers over 90% of the body and consists of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. ETPS stimulation of parasympathetic “gates” can have a calming effect on the body, providing the patient with immediate and long-lasting relief from pain, anxiety and insomnia.
3. **Endorphin response.** Endorphins are similar to morphine in their ability to reduce pain, but are thousands of times stronger and do not produce harmful side effects. Endorphins may be released through concentrated low frequency ETPS stimulation of neural points causing the pituitary to secrete endorphins thereby releasing adrenal cortico-atrophic

hormone (ACTH) and hydrocortisols for acceleration of soft tissue repair.

4. **Myofascial release.** Chronic pain is known to originate in neuropathy, or functional alterations of the peripheral nervous system (PNS). Neuropathy is always caused by muscle contraction, while radiculopathy is neuropathy at the spinal root. Relaxing contracted muscles relieves impingement of the nerves, reduces heightened sensitivity of pathways and improves patient’s ROM.

The balance of this chapter, divided into two main sections, provides an overview of ETPS therapy. Part A describes the six pillars of ETPS therapy, the core foundation of knowledge upon which the synthesis of different modalities is built. They are (1) acupuncture; (2) the relationship between radiculopathy, neuropathy and chronic pain; (3) the relationship between dermatomes and chronic pain; (4) the relationship between gait and chronic pain; (5) the relationship between scar therapy (neural) and chronic pain; and (6) ETPS stimulation. Based on this body of knowledge, Part B describes five ETPS protocols, all of which use an approach to treatment which allows therapists to diagnostically isolate and treat chronic pain concurrently.

ETPS therapy has proven successful in the treatment of various indications. These include back and neck pain, whiplash, TMJ, fibromyalgia, neuropathies, migraines, headaches, sport injuries, carpal tunnel, failed backs, post-operative radiculopathy, plantar fasciitis, frozen shoulder and shoulder pain, tennis elbow and most other neuromyofascial pain syndromes. Due to the limitations of this forum, the description of ETPS therapy and related treatments will focus on back and neck pain, fibromyalgia and plantar fasciitis protocols.

PART A: THE SIX PILLARS OF ETPS THERAPY

ACUPUNCTURE

In order to utilize ETPS protocols effectively, therapists must have a basic, practical understanding of acupuncture. Long regarded as an effective modality for the treatment of pain, acupuncture contributes four key dimensions to the development of ETPS protocols: the release of endorphins, key acupuncture points, a numbering system for point location, and the movement of circulation and energy. Each dimension is discussed below.

The Release of Endorphins

Acupuncture has been scientifically proven to release endogenous morphines from the anterior pituitary (Andersson,