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San Jose Mercury News (California)

May 15, 2013 Wednesday

**Cupping: Jennifer Aniston does it, but will it work for you?**

**BYLINE:** By Angela Hill Oakland Tribune

**SECTION:** NEWS; Lifestyle

**LENGTH:** 1202 words

John, a stout, gray-haired 58-year-old man from Mountain View, lay face down and bare-backed on the treatment table. A dozen glass orbs the size of cue balls lined his spine, the skin beneath them bulging ruby red as blood was drawn to the surface.

While the unusual scene might suggest the man had encountered a freak accident in a light bulb factory, this was actually a treatment he eagerly chose at the Los Gatos **Acupuncture** and Qigong Center.

This is **cupping** therapy, a millennia-old technique in **Chinese** **medicine** -- also employed for decades in the United States under the category of alternative care -- chiefly sought out to relieve aches and pains and increase circulation. Practitioners believe it can increase the movement in the body's own energy, or "qi."

And it's making news once again, with stars such as Jennifer Aniston, Victoria Beckham, Gwyneth Paltrow and hubby Chris Martin recently sporting the telltale red circles temporarily left behind from treatments. Kelly Osbourne even tweeted out a photo of herself during a cupping session a couple of weeks ago, showing a small glass ball attached to her foot, and adding "went 2 the most amazing Chinese Dr who fixed me w/ cups."

Everything old ...

Acupuncturists and massage therapists who regularly employ the technique smile tolerantly when asked about the "new" trend.

"Yes, I had to laugh," whispered South Bay massage therapist Grant Atwell as gentle sounds of chirping birds and crashing waves played softly in the background of the treatment room where John, who asked that his last name not be used, was being cupped by acupuncturist and clinic founder Adam Atman. "We see the stars on the red carpet, showing off the discoloration," Atwell said. "It looks like they've been attacked by a friendly octopus."

John offered a muffled agreement about the octopus analogy as he lay on the table on a recent Thursday afternoon. "Either octopus, or big leeches," he mumbled, describing the sensation of the cups sucking at his pale skin. He sought the treatment as a possible cure for hearing loss and blood pressure issues that ail him.

"You can see the redness in his back. From a Chinese medical point of view, this indicates too much heat going up his body," said Atman, before applying the cups. "What the cupping does is pull the blood to the surface, pull the heat out of it and vent the stagnant blood. It also lifts the tissue and improves circulation to those areas."

This form of cupping -- one of several versions of the technique -- is considered a traditional style in which specially designed glass vessels are swabbed on the inside with alcohol, then lit with a flame and placed on the skin, the heat creating instant suction. The client is not affected by the flame, merely feeling a warm sensation and a pulling on the skin.

A cup of history

Some modern devices involve silicone cups, which are more flexible and can be used on joints and many other parts of the body. Cupping is often used in conjunction with other therapies, such as acupuncture or reflexology, Atwell said. He uses cups made of rubber and employs a gliding technique, rather than keeping the cups stationary. Small cups can even be used on the face.

The therapy dates back 3,000-plus years, according to Sonia Morton of the International Cupping Therapy Association, or ICTA, based in Washington state. Originally, animal horns, bamboo or even gourds were used for the procedure.

"The general idea is negative pressure, rather than tissue compression," Morton said. "The suction lifts the connective tissue, breaks up and drains stagnation while increasing blood and lymph flow to skin and muscles in ways not possible using compression. It's great for pain, repetitive strains, inflammation, toxicity, digestive problems and many other issues."

Educators at the ICTA have indeed seen a growth in interest in the practice during recent years, sometimes even training medical doctors and chiropractors in the technique.

"I liken it to hardwood floors versus carpeting, with hardwood being Eastern medicine and carpet as Western," Morton said. "Everyone used to have hardwood floors, then carpet came along and was the trend. But now we're back to hardwood floors again because of the superior benefits."

While reviews of cupping therapy at the National Institutes of Health suggest more rigorous studies are needed for definitive answers as to the efficacy of the practice, some research has indeed indicated benefits for pain relief. And the Mayo Clinic reports some studies show a possible beneficial role for cupping in treating fibromyalgia, but also recommends more research.

The marks that often result from a treatment -- which can last from a few hours to a week, depending on skin type and other conditions -- are not bruises, as many believe.

"There is no trauma, no broken capillaries," Morton said. "It's from the toxins that come to the surface. The worse the toxicity in a certain area, or the older an injury, the longer the marks will be apparent."

Dhyana Iris, a massage therapist in the East Bay, recently added cupping to her repertoire after falling in love the with effects of the treatments for herself. "It's a totally delicious experience," she said. Iris has adapted an extremely gentle version of the gliding technique to work with older people with chronic illness or with Alzheimer's, or those who are approaching the end of life.

Costs of procedures vary depending on the practitioner and on accompanying applications, such as hot-stone massage or reflexology. Iris usually charges about $75 to $100 for a cupping session, but greatly reduces her prices for elderly clients.

Don't try this at home

Now don't go rummaging the recycling bin for your empty peanut butter jars. Cupping should only be performed by licensed health care providers. And there are many situations in which even specialists will not perform the treatment, such as if the client has skin infections, fever or diabetes, Atman said.

While the cups performed their work on John, Atman moved to another room at the clinic to attend Alexsandra Marianetti, 38, of Campbell, a tantra instructor who goes by the name of Kika. Soon, she had about 26 cups running up and down her back.

"Kika has two conditions perfect for cupping -- congestion from a cold, and allergies," Atman said.

"It feels like someone is placing a kiss on my back," Kika said, kidding with Atman as he applied the cups. "Be sure to give me a nice design."

Follow Angela Hill onTwitter.com/giveemhill , or read her Sunday Give 'Em Hill column.

Cupping therapy was used in Egypt dating back some 3,500 years, even apparent in hieroglyphic writing.

The famous Taoist alchemist and herbalist Ge Hong (A.D. 281"341) was a proponent of cupping.

In ancient Greece, Hippocrates recommended the use of cups for a variety of ailments.

In the early 1900s, British physician Sir Arthur Keith wrote about witnessing cupping performed "with excellent success."

In China, extensive research has been carried out on the technique, and even today the practice continues to be a mainstay of government-sponsored hospitals in traditional Chinese medicine.

Source: International Cupping Therapy Association,www.cuppingtherapy.org .

**LOAD-DATE:** May 21, 2013

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**GRAPHIC:** Adam Atman L.Ac. MMQ. attaches a traditional fire cup to treat John, from Mountain View, for back pain at Los Gatos Acupuncture and Qigong Center in Los Gatos, Calif. on Thursday, May 9, 2013. Cupping is a Chinese medicine technique that's been around for thousands of years. The cups attach by vacuum to draw out toxins. Atman quickly heats the cup with the flame to create a vacuum to attach the cup. (Dan Honda/Bay Area News Group)

Cups attached to the back of Alexsandra Marianetti, of Campbell, who is being treated for a cold and allergies at Los Gatos Acupuncture and Qigong Center in Los Gatos, Calif. on Thursday, May 9, 2013. Cupping is a Chinese medicine technique that's been around for thousands of years. The cups attach by vacuum to draw out toxins. (Dan Honda/Bay Area News Group)

Cups attached to the back of a patient being treated for back pain are photographed at Los Gatos Acupuncture and Qigong Center in Los Gatos, Calif. on Thursday, May 9, 2013. Cupping is a Chinese medicine technique that's been around for thousands of years. The cups attach by vacuum to draw out toxins. (Dan Honda/Bay Area News Group)

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** Newspaper

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San Jose Mercury News (California)

July 8, 2005 Friday MORNING FINAL EDITION

**ACCREDITATION FOR TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE SCHOOL BRINGS SIGNIFICANT BENEFITS**

**BYLINE:** TRUONG PHUOC KHANH, MERCURY NEWS

**SECTION:** LOCAL; Pg. 7A

**LENGTH:** 149 words

**DATELINE:** SUNNYVALE

Silicon Valley's first **traditional** **Chinese** **medicine** university has received accreditation by the Accreditation Commission for **Acupuncture** and Oriental Medicine.

The University of East-West Medicine, founded in Sunnyvale in 1997, has about 170 students studying **acupuncture** and herbology in its master's program. Accreditation means students now can apply for government financial assistance and can transfer college credits to other accredited universities.

"It's a significant achievement for the school," said Jenty Hasan, a university spokeswoman. "The students are very excited. It opens the door for students to all kinds of things."

The master's program at the university provides graduate education for the training of practitioners in traditional Chinese medicine. The university also offers courses in integrating Western medical sciences with traditional Chinese medicine.

**LOAD-DATE:** September 15, 2005

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**NOTES:** VALLEY BRIEFING

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San Mateo County Times (San Mateo, CA)

September 4, 2002 Wednesday

**Chinese medicine enters mainstream;**

**Prescription herbs, acupuncture emerge as pain-relief alternative**

**BYLINE:** By Julissa McKinnon , STAFF WRITER

**SECTION:** FRONT PAGE

**LENGTH:** 661 words

For decades, doctors in America have prescribed pills for pain -- white ones, blue ones, big ones, new ones.

And for centuries, practitioners of **traditional** **Chinese** **medicine** have eased aches, strains and spasms through herbal remedies and **acupuncture**.

Although **acupuncture's** needles have filtered into mainstream Western medicine, the secrets of the Eastern herb world remain unknown to most of America's pharmaceutical companies.

Dr. Young Soon Chung keeps several such secrets stored at the back of her bright white office, tucked away in an office complex off busy Hesperian Boulevard. After studying both Western and Eastern medicine in San Francisco and Korea, Chung decided to prescribe herbs in the ancient way. The goal, as always in **Chinese** **medicine,** is balance, she said, adding a finger point.

"When we are sick, our body's balance is off. For instance, heat will consume all your water, but if you regulate your chi level, you will reduce the heat," she said, referring to "chi" -- a Chinese measurement of the oxygen, carbon dioxide, nutrients, and overall energy flow through the human body.

Indeed, the entire theory of traditional Chinese medicine is based on the balance of two opposing yet interdependent forces -- yin and yang. The ancient Chinese used water and fire to symbolize yin and yang -- anything moving, hot, bright and hyperactive is yang, while anything calm, cool, dim and hypoactive is yin. Each organ contains a level of yin and yang, and the traditional Chinese medic's job is to coax a balance between the two elements.

As Chung mixes an herbal remedy to relieve migraine headaches, she surrounds the most potent estrogen-containing herb -- dong quai -- with sprinklings of other roots. Later she will brew the brownish mixture into a tea for her patient Yan Hayes.

Hayes drinks the dong quai concoction and receives acupuncture to help relieve her migraine headaches. She says that after trying countless Western pain killers, she finally listened to her mother, who told her to follow the traditions of Laos, their homeland.

"Every time I used to get migraines I would have to stay in my room -- even my kids couldn't be in the same room," Hayes said as Chung slightly pierced her ear with tiny needles. "The pain medicines my doctor gave me weren't working. I came here and got better; even my doctor couldn't believe it."

Meanwhile, other American companies have taken a different approach to dong quai, which entered the realm of Western scientific study in 1997. By leaching out the most potent chemicals from the root, they magnify the root's normal strength. Some of the new dong quai products such as Endow Plus for Women promise to boost bra size, while others, such as MenopauseSmart from HealthWorldOnline, say dong quai will tame menopausal hot flashes.

But Chung warns that concentrating the herb to such high levels strains the liver, kidney and stomach.

"There is a belief throughout homeopathic medicine that the mega-dose ends up killing the patient," she said. "If you give them the right dose, you can cure the condition without having side effects on other organs."

However, while Chung believes Chinese medicine provides a healthier approach to curing chronic ailments such as migraine headaches and back pain, she said Western medicine is far superior during emergency situations.

"When you have an acute problem or infection, you can't fool around with a slow process," she said, giving the example of a patient who is severely dehydrated.

Other situations call for a combination of both Western and Eastern practices, such as when cancer patients go through chemotherapy, Chung said.

"They need chemotherapy, but it will deplete their energy," Chung said. "Acupuncture can help control the side effects of nausea, and herbs can help to reduce the toxins in the cancer patient's body."

To contact Dr. Chung, call [510] 887-7697 or visit www.chungsacupuncture.com

**LOAD-DATE:** June 18, 2003

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

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San Jose Mercury News (California)

March 2, 2003 Sunday MO1 EDITION

**Acupuncture, herbs displayed at health fair;**

**MANY IN BAY AREA USE CHINESE MEDICINE AS PART OF THEIR PRIMARY HEALTH CARE**

**BYLINE:** By David L. Beck; Mercury News

**SECTION:** B; Pg. 1

**LENGTH:** 848 words

Today's **Chinese** **Medicine** Health Fair at the Five Branches Institute in Santa Cruz will offer tea and herbs, **acupuncture** and lectures. It also offers a peek at what for an increasing number of people is becoming primary health care: a 5,000-year-old system that claims to maintain health by correcting balances within the body.

At Five Branches, said founder Ron Zaidman, ''We asked people who their primary medical provider was, and 85 percent of them said their acupuncturist.''

An inquiry among people at a clinic that practices **traditional** **Chinese** **medicine** is hardly an unbiased sample. But neither is it what Zaidman expected to hear, he said. It may be suggestive of a profound shift in people's attitudes toward medicine, or it may be just, well, Santa Cruz.

Or California. ''We're a funny state,'' said Catherine Dower, an attorney who works in the health field. ''Acupuncture is pretty popular, and it is a large profession in this state.'' Dower is associate director for health law and policy at the Center for the Health Professions, an agency of the University of California-San Francisco medical center.

Approximately 4,300 people hold acupuncture licenses in California. That number is estimated to be half the total number in the United States, but it does not include holders of other medical licenses, primarily physicians and chiropractors, who also perform acupuncture.

On the one hand, said Dower, ''There are a lot of people using Chinese medicine for their primary care.'' And on the other hand, she cautioned, ''No one's done any real good data collection on consumer usage of alternative therapies.''

Here are some figures:

The Five Branches clinic averages about 100 patients a day, according to Zaidman. They come for acupuncture, herbs, Chinese or Tibetan massage, or other treatments by the faculty and interns.

Nine percent of all Americans have had acupuncture at one time or another, according to a Harris Interactive survey commissioned by the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine. A majority of those people, 58 percent, sought treatment for disorders ''of the bones, muscles, joints and nervous system.''

Half of those surveyed said they'd try it if their doctors recommended it and their insurance covered it. Some insurance does, in California. And some physicians not only recommend it but also perform it.

The medical schools at UCLA, the University of Southern California and Harvard all offer intensive programs in it, although legally in California a physician can perform acupuncture without any training. In fact, said Dr. Dawn Motyka, a Scotts Valley physician who uses acupuncture, a physician could pick up enough acupuncture at a weekend seminar to perform some basic first-aid procedures.

In her family practice, she may use acupuncture for ''chronic pain, tendinitis, headaches, irritable bowel -- the sorts of things where I really don't have good drugs for it or the drugs that I have have significant downsides.''

She sees acupuncture as an augmentation of the ''linear'' Western way of thinking about how medicine works, what she calls the ''cut-this-out-and-see-what-goes-wrong'' approach.

Motyka, who has gone through the UCLA program and expects to become board-certified in acupuncture this spring, says she practices ''European style'' acupuncture, which uses electrical stimulation through the needles, as opposed to Chinese style, which relies on the insertion and the manipulation of needles alone to stimulate the body's acupuncture points.

Zaidman, 59, a Stanford MBA who did business in Europe and his native Venezuela before settling on Santa Cruz, founded Five Branches in 1984. That makes it one of the oldest of the country's 45 schools of traditional Chinese medicine, he said. His faculty members are primarily Asian, and his students, mostly in their 30s and seeking a career change, are overwhelmingly white.

They spend three to four years at the school, whose offices, treatment rooms and herb center occupy the ground floor of an office building near the Santa Cruz harbor. It's a master's degree program that includes courses in Western medicine and Chinese language and culture as well as the ''five branches'' -- acupuncture, herbs, Chinese massage, QiGong (described as ''energetics and exercises'') and diet.

Motyka says that the sort of traditional Chinese medicine taught and practiced at schools like Five Branches derives from the need, following China's Cultural Revolution in the 1970s and '80s, to train rudimentary practitioners quickly. She calls it ''the Cliff's Notes version of the ancient Chinese texts.''

The Chinese may speak of the flow of Chi, while the French, leaders in European acupuncture research, may speak of electricity. But ''Both methods are accepted, and the proof is in the pudding,'' said Motyka. ''They work.''

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED

Chinese Medicine Health Fair, Five Branches Institute, 200 Seventh Ave., Santa Cruz. (831) 476-9424. www.fivebranches.edu

Contact David L. Beck at dbeck@sjmercury.com

**LOAD-DATE:** March 2, 2003

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San Jose Mercury News (California)

May 16, 2003 Friday MORNING FINAL EDITION

**IN FIGHT AGAINST SARS, CHINA RELIES ON TRADITION;**

**HERBAL TREATMENTS, WESTERN MEDICINE ARE WIDELY PAIRED**

**BYLINE:** MICHAEL DORGAN, Mercury News Beijing Bureau

**SECTION:** FRONT; Pg. 1A

**LENGTH:** 766 words

**DATELINE:** BEIJING

In its fight against a new virus, China is relying on an old style of medicine.

**Traditional** **Chinese** **medicine,** which has theories and remedies that date back thousands of years, is playing a key role in the battle against severe acute respiratory syndrome, both as a preventive measure and a treatment.

Across China, the epicenter of the global SARS epidemic, millions of people are consuming herbal potions formulated to boost their immune systems, to ward off infection by the virus.

And in hospitals throughout the country, practitioners of **traditional** **Chinese** **medicine** armed with **acupuncture** needles and herbal remedies work alongside doctors trained in Western medicine to try to save the lives and shorten the recoveries of the more than 5,000 Chinese who have been stricken by the SARS virus.

No medicine from either system has been proven effective against SARS. But Dr. He Puren, an acupuncturist at the Beijing Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine, said a combination was thought to give patients the best chances of recovery.

He and other traditional-medicine practitioners said early indications were promising. They cite the experience of No. 1 Hospital of the Guangzhou Traditional Chinese Medicine University, which is in the capital of China's southern Guangdong province, where the SARS epidemic is believed to have started last November.

Fang Ning, a hospital official, said Wednesday that it had treated 56 SARS patients since the first one appeared in mid-January. None has died, 52 have recovered, and the four remaining patients are well on their way to recovering, he said.

Fang added that no hospital staff had been infected, a significant achievement in an epidemic in which nearly 20 percent of hospitalized patients have been medical workers.

Western medicine is used at the hospital, too, but the emphasis is on Chinese medicine.

In Beijing, most hospitals that treat SARS patients use the steroids and antibiotics of Western medicine along with Chinese traditional remedies, said He, the acupuncturist.

Zhang Mao, a vice mayor of Beijing and head of the medical-care team of the city's SARS task force, said the city's 26 Chinese traditional-medicine hospitals and more than 3,000 doctors who specialize in traditional medicine were making a major contribution to the fight against SARS.

Traditional medicine "may actually offer something very helpful that Western medicine should know about and use," said Dr. James Maguire, an infectious-disease specialist with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta who is on a WHO team of experts in Beijing.

But making a scientific assessment of traditional Chinese medicine's effectiveness in treating SARS will not be easy, Maguire said, in part because it almost always is used in combination with Western medicine, and treatments tend to be highly individualized.

A man with a headache who goes to a Western doctor may be told to take an aspirin, for example. If he goes to a traditional Chinese practitioner, he probably will end up with an herbal remedy or acupuncture treatment that takes into account his gender, age, general condition and the season of the year.

"We treat the human being rather than the disease," said Dr. Albert Leung, a faculty member of the School of Chinese Medicine at Hong Kong's Baptist University and a leader in the successful push to include traditional Chinese medicine in the treatment of SARS patients in Hong Kong's hospitals.

Leung acknowledged that "it is very difficult to prove whether it works or not." But he said he and other traditional practitioners were confident that their ancient knowledge could be effective.

"We care how the symptoms are presented, and treat accordingly," he said.

Yin and yang are the two fundamental principles of Chinese cosmology, and they underpin traditional-medicine theory. Yin is negative. Yang is positive. Only when the yin and yang forces within the body are balanced can qi, or vital energy, flow freely, according to that theory.

This theory also holds that the human body is crisscrossed with invisible channels through which qi flows, much the way blood flows through arteries andveins. An unimpeded flow of strong qi is the definition of health.

Most Chinese believe in the existence of this system. On the windowsill of the Beijing vice mayor's office, this invisible world is represented by a road map of qi channels that cover the shiny white surface of a plastic man.

"Chinese medicine can reduce the heat, smooth the qi and get rid of the poison," Zhang said.

**LOAD-DATE:** July 28, 2005

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**GRAPHIC:** Photo;

PHOTO: MIRANDA MIMI KUO -- KNIGHT RIDDER

A pharmacist at Beijing's White Temple Pharmacy on Tuesday prepares packages of traditional herbs for use against SARS.

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San Jose Mercury News (California)

January 22, 2005 Saturday MORNING FINAL EDITION

**NEW CAMPUS SYMBOLIZES ACCEPTANCE**

**BYLINE:** JESSIE MANGALIMAN, Mercury News

**SECTION:** LOCAL; Pg. 1B

**LENGTH:** 875 words

When Ron Zaidman and Joanna Zhao opened Five Branches, a school and clinic for **traditional** **Chinese** **medicine** in Santa Cruz 20 years ago, **acupuncture** was all but called quackery.

"If I had told somebody 20 years ago that I'd had **acupuncture** treatment, it wouldn't have been called voodoo but it was considered not far removed from it," said Zaidman.

"But now, nobody would be surprised. It's not that far out," he said.

Later this month, Zaidman and his wife, Zhao, will welcome the first students of a new branch of their clinic and school in San Jose, testament to how much the field of alternative and complementary medicine has grown in the Bay Area and the country. It's also a sign, some industry experts say, of the increasing integration of traditional practices of medicine, like acupuncture, into Western culture.

Five Branches is one of the oldest such schools in Northern California, and one of six in the Bay Area. Ten others are located in Los Angeles and San Diego.

"I can tell that things have changed based on my conversations with neighbors," said Yu-Wen Chiu, director of the San Jose campus of Five Branches.

"When I was in school and I once told my neighbors I was studying acupuncture, the response was, 'Oh, that's interesting. I've never heard about that.'

"Now, when I tell my neighbors what I do, they know," Chiu said.

On a recent Tuesday afternoon, Zhao, the college's academic dean and clinic director, gave visitors a tour of the new school at 3031 Tisch Way, near Santana Row.

The school will start out with one classroom, 20 students and an eight-room clinic.

"We're hoping this school will be bigger than the one in Santa Cruz," Zhao said.

Five Branches in Santa Cruz started in a single classroom with 18 students and a small clinic. Today, the college, which offers a four-year master's degree in traditional Chinese medicine, has 200 students and sees about 100 patients a day. There were five instructors in the first year; today there are 37, including 20 licensed acupuncturists and seven physicians. One third of the curriculum is devoted to Western medicine, Zhao said.

Zaidman said the move to San Jose is in response to the growing demand for practitioners of acupuncture and herbal medicine, traditions that date back 2,000 years in China. The practice first found an audience in the United States in the 1960s, but it wasn't until 1979 that California began licensing acupuncturists -- the first state to do so.

Since then, Zaidman said, much has changed in how traditional Chinese medicine is viewed. Now, the state of California has an Acupuncture Board, a government body that oversees regulation of schools like Five Branches and licensing of acupuncturists. Most health insurance companies, Medi-Cal -- state-sponsored insurance for indigent and low-income people -- and worker's compensation accept acupuncture treatment.

Some Bay Area hospitals have integrated acupuncture into their practices.

The National Institutes of Health recently released the findings of an important study showing that acupuncture relieved the pain of people with arthritic knees.

What's more, there is now a government-recognized group that oversees accreditation of professional training programs in acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine, the Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine. The group, based in Maryland, is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

"When we started, the Department of Education considered us a vocational school," Zaidman said. "We argued this is serious, on the level of a doctorate or master's degree program."

The school's demographics have also changed over the years. In the early years of Five Branches, most of its students were people seeking alternatives to Western medicine.

These days, many of the students are young college students looking to start professional careers in the field, or people switching careers.

Marlene Griffith-Aunko, 31, of Montara, is in tech support for a Bay Area biotech company, but when she finishes her final year at Five Branches in another year, she's going to practice traditional Chinese medicine full time.

Griffith-Aunko was rear-ended by a drunken driver in a 1998 car accident and suffered serious back injury. Only acupuncture, she said, helped get rid of the pain.

"I've had an interest in health and science for a long time," she said. So when she started getting acupuncture treatments, she also began working as a receptionist and scheduler for a Menlo Park acupuncturist.

Going into her fourth year of training, Griffith-Aunko said she's delighted to be finishing her clinical training at the new San Jose campus.

"I'll still commute," she said, "but I have a lot more friends to see near San Jose."

Will Morris, president of the American Association of Oriental Medicine, the industry group for practitioners, said the expansion of Five Branches into San Jose "is emblematic of the acceptance of this medicine in this culture."

"I see it as a smart business move on the part of the school," Morris said. "The fact that they have the economics to support this is also evidence in this direction of the full acceptance of this particular medicine."

**LOAD-DATE:** September 6, 2005

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**GRAPHIC:** Photos (3), Diagram;

DIAGRAM: MERCURY NEWS

KEY POINTS: Acupuncture students study the flow of energy through the body.

PHOTO: PATRICK TEHAN - MERCURY NEWS

Licensed acupuncturist Susana Shen inserts needles into a man's painful knees at the Five Branches Institute's new school and clinic in San Jose. Relief of pain through acupuncture is a practice going back 2,000 years in China.

PHOTO: PATRICK TEHAN - MERCURY NEWS

Ron Zaidman and Joanna Zhao, president and clinic director, respectively, of the Five Branches Institute, will open the doors of their San Jose school Jan. 31.

PHOTO: PATRICK TEHAN - MERCURY NEWS

PAIN RELIEF Licensed acupuncturist Susana Shen applies needles to a man's knees at the Five Branches Institute in San Jose. The new campus is a branch of the original Santa Cruz school and clinic.

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