

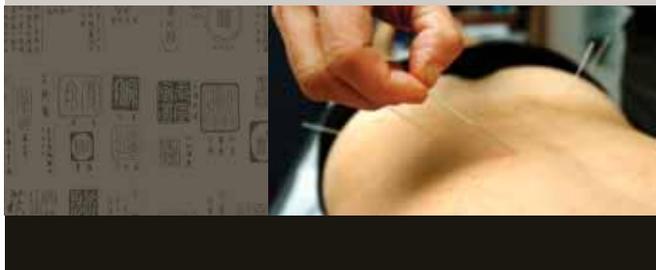
## *the history*

Acupuncture is part of Chinese Traditional Medicine (TCM) which includes herbs, dietary therapy and massage. It is an ancient system of healing and has been continuously refined during its 4500 year history. Today it is widely practiced in the West.

## *what is acupuncture?*

Acupuncture is an ancient form of Chinese healing which balances the body, mind and spirit. Very fine sterile stainless steel needles are inserted into the body at carefully selected points to stimulate the body's own healing processes. These points lie on pairs of channels that cover the body and through which "qi" (pronounced "chee") flows. Traditional Chinese Medicine likens these channels to the rivers of China, which provide a communication and nourishment system for the whole body.

In simple terms qi is the "vital life force" of the body. It keeps the blood circulating, warms the body, fights disease and keeps our minds and emotions free and uncluttered. Disease occurs when there is disruption to the balanced flow of qi within the body. Consequently the aim of acupuncture is to remove any imbalances or obstructions within the body and to encourage the qi to flow smoothly.



## *The New Zealand Acupuncture Standards Authority Inc.*

NZASA is a standards-based registration and disciplinary body committed to maintaining standards of clinical competency in acupuncture in NZ.

NZASA was established in 2000 as an Incorporated Society. It is independent from, and not aligned with, any one qualification-granting institution. NZASA is part of the collective profession which applied to have acupuncture recognised under the Health Practitioners Competency Assurance Act 2003, and is preparing its members for that transition.

NZASA is underpinned by ethical, technical and practice standards, which are implemented through the registration and certification programme and through a code of conduct and disciplinary procedures that apply to all its Registered Acupuncturists. NZASA operates a competency assessment regime that includes workplace evaluation by qualified assessors.

NZASA maintains a Register of Competency Assured Practitioners who are statutorily recognised as ACC providers in terms of Section 6 (1) of the Injury Prevention, Rehabilitation and Compensation (IPRC) Act 2005.

*For further information, contact:*

*The Registrar / Secretary*

*44 Greenlane East, Remuera, Auckland*

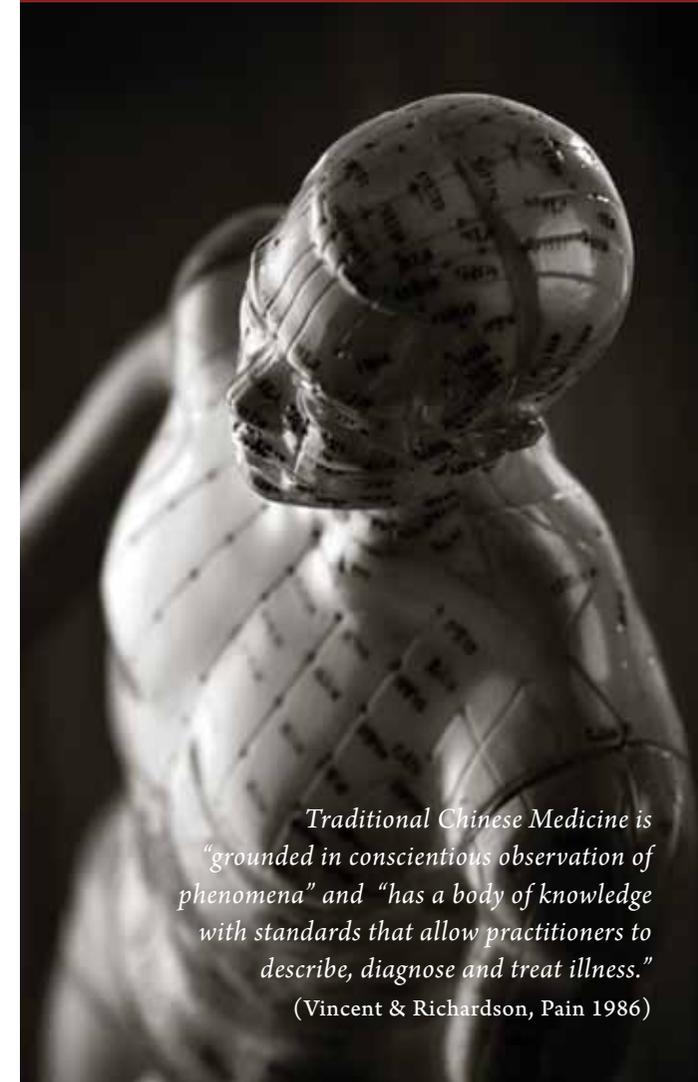
*tel: +64 9 520 1919 fax: +64 9 520 4026*

*email: [nzasainc@xtra.co.nz](mailto:nzasainc@xtra.co.nz) or [www.nzasa.org](http://www.nzasa.org)*



# *Acupuncture*

*how it works & what to expect from the consultation*



*Traditional Chinese Medicine is "grounded in conscientious observation of phenomena" and "has a body of knowledge with standards that allow practitioners to describe, diagnose and treat illness."*

*(Vincent & Richardson, Pain 1986)*

## *who can be treated?*

There is no age limit for treatment. Babies and children may be treated by acupressure, massage (tuina), or by stimulation of points using an acupuncture laser. Please advise the practitioner if you are pregnant, have a pacemaker, hepatitis, AIDS or any other infectious conditions.

## *types of treatment*

A typical treatment usually includes acupuncture needles. Generally, between two and ten needles (sometimes more) are inserted for each treatment, depending on the nature of the condition being treated. The following may also be used: moxibustion (warming of the acupuncture point with moxa, a Chinese herb called *artemesia vulgaris*), acupressure, electro-stimulation of the acupuncture needles, cups, pricking, laser stimulation of the points etc.

## *will it hurt?*

Needle insertion is relatively painless. Once the needle is in place there may be a mild tingling, numbness or ache at the needle site. Sometimes there may be cramping, heaviness, distension or an "electric" sensation either around the needle or traveling up or down the affected acupuncture channel. Response to treatment is individual.

## *how many treatments?*

The number of treatments can vary: two to three treatments for acute (short term) conditions; usually ten or more treatments for chronic (long term) conditions.

## *how to get the best from my treatment*

On the day of treatment it is best to avoid heavy physical work, strenuous exercise, stress and alcohol. Occasionally patients may notice a brief worsening of the symptoms of their condition. More commonly there is a gradual improvement from the first treatment and this is consolidated with progressive treatments. Generally the more a person becomes involved in being responsible for their own health, the more they will get from their treatment. Patients can maximize the effectiveness of their treatment by following the advice they are given, especially with regard to diet, stress and lifestyle.

## *do I have to believe in acupuncture for it to work?*

No. Acupuncture is effective with or without "belief", even on animals. Please do not hesitate to ask questions as they arise.

## *what can be treated?*

Acupuncture can be used to treat many of the medical problems that you consult your doctor for.

For example, it may be used to treat:

- injuries e.g. sprains, burns, tendonitis
- internal disorders e.g. period pains, premenstrual syndrome, menopausal syndrome, irritable bowel syndrome, diabetes, high or low blood pressure
- environmental problems e.g. asthma, allergies
- emotional disorders e.g. anxiety, insomnia, depression
- pregnancy, delivery and post-delivery, infertility

## *side effects?*

Adverse side effects are relatively few. You may feel calm or sleepy following the treatment. Bruising at the needle site is uncommon, but may occur. Rare accidents such as puncturing an internal organ (e.g. the lung) have been recorded.

## *Scientific evidence*

There is a large body of scientific data from animal and human studies that seeks to explain the mechanisms of acupuncture. Current reviews have shown that acupuncture promotes the production of "endorphins" that relieve pain, improves the immune system, regulates blood flow and hormones, is anti-inflammatory and anti-spasmodic, and improves your overall feeling of well-being.

Acupuncture has been used in western pain management since the 1970s. Research and evidence based studies have shown that acupuncture is effective in treating many medical disorders as well (e.g. *The Vital Meridian*, A. Bensoussan, 1997).

The role of a traditional acupuncturist is to work with the whole person. They treat people on an individual basis following the guiding principles of traditional Chinese philosophy and medical theory.