

Nurturing wellness



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Principal: CNM

Acupuncture makes an excellent partner to the western holistic tradition of naturopathy.

A good diet, for example, is one of the fundamental aspects of the naturopathic approach. Acupuncture works by treating the 'qi', or 'vital force', but as the Yellow Emperor explains, 'qi is produced by the food one eats'. If the diet is poor, the acupuncturist has much less qi to work with.

Naturopathic acupuncture

Right from the very time of its origins, around 2,500 years ago in China, acupuncture has been part of a whole package of healthy living. Rather than just focusing on the symptoms of disease, the acupuncturist would always try to find out the cause.

In the 'The Yellow Emperor's Classic', the Emperor asks his Minister why people are not as healthy as they used to be, and why life expectancy is falling. The Minister

explains that people's lifestyles are less healthy than they used to be; in the past people ate properly, and tried to live a natural lifestyle, in harmony with the natural environment. Nowadays, however, people eat too much rich food, and don't rest properly. The Minister was clear that acupuncture must be supported by changes in lifestyle, or it would only be limited in its effectiveness.

In the acupuncture student clinic at the College of Naturopathic Medicine (CNM), we find that patients who follow dietary advice tend to get well quickly, whereas those who ignore it get better more slowly. In fact, those who do not change their diets often hit a kind of ceiling on their wellness; they cannot get beyond a certain point without dietary changes. A good diet is

one of the fundamental aspects of the naturopathic approach. We also find that if patients increase their wellness, they are less attracted to junk food, excessive alcohol and drugs.

Acupuncture in the modern world

Acupuncture was developed in a very different world to ours. Our pattern of disease is therefore often quite different to that seen in ancient China. At the time acupuncture was developed, disease was often the result of a simple lack of basic food, and chronic overwork. In our society, by contrast, disease is often caused by an excess of toxicity. Toxins from pollution, drugs, heavy metals, pesticides, herbicides, increased radiation and electro smog can affect the body negatively; so can vaccinations, artificial sweeteners, additives, too much sugar, and over-processed and refined or microwaved foods. Therefore, CNM has developed 'naturopathic acupuncture'.

Students studying at CNM are taught from the very start to consider wrong diet and lifestyle as contributing factors to disease, and to educate clients in developing more healthy, sustainable lifestyles. Reducing the level of toxins is part of the return to full health; modern diseases benefit hugely from an approach which includes various methods of detoxification.

The focus is on using the body's own organs of detoxification, including the lymphatic system, the skin, kidneys, lungs, colon

and liver. By getting these organs to work more effectively the body will release toxins, and with the support of acupuncture the client can recover faster and hopefully regain full health.

The growth of CNM

I first experienced this phenomenon more than 35 years ago when I qualified as a naturopath and began to practise. I felt frustrated when I had insufficient knowledge to help some of my clients. So I set about studying in various countries, to acquire a range of further specialist skills which improved my client results and meant that my clinic was soon oversubscribed. Eventually I decided to open a college which under one roof would teach students naturopathic skills that could enhance their effectiveness as practitioners.

CNM opened its doors in the UK in 1998 and now has ten colleges across the UK and Ireland, offering naturopathic acupuncture in London, Bristol and Dublin. Our acupuncture lecturers are trained both in both traditional acupuncture and naturopathic procedures.

Our new building near King's Cross has eight lecture rooms, twelve clinic rooms, a library and a café, and Bristol has similarly spacious facilities. CNM graduates are awarded two diplomas – one in acupuncture, the other in naturopathy – and we like to think our hands-on practical approach is the reason why 80 per cent of our graduates are practising.

Flexible study programmes allow students to combine subjects or to continue their studies at a discount after graduation, choosing from a range of natural therapies.

Our newest courses include training as a 'natural chef'. Taught by leading chefs, the course incorporates basic Chinese principles.

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