

Auricular Therapy: Is there a place for it in your NP tool kit?

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Objectives

- Overview of history of acupuncture
- Review of types of acupuncture
- Discuss history and significance of Auricular Acupuncture
- Review particulars of auricular therapy
- Case Reviews

Disclosures

- The views expressed in this presentation are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy of the Department of the Veterans Affairs, Department of Defense, or U.S. Government

Which One Am I Talking About?

- Auriculotherapy
- Auricular Therapy
- Auricular Acupuncture

Auriculotherapy/Auricular Acupuncture Evolves with Chinese Acupuncture

- Meridian based medicine - Seeks to restore harmony and balance: **Qi - life force energy** - travels along 12 main pathways or meridians within the body
- **Qi is profoundly disturbed by traumatic stress**
- Historically evolved in China over 5000 years ago
- Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic- earliest major medical source dating back to 206 BC- 220 AD



History (continued)

- China - isolated from rest of world because of internal feuding for power.
- 1800's- Outside trade and influx of Christianity and Western medicine
- 1822 - Qing Emperor orders teaching of acupuncture to stop at Imperial Medical college
- Restrictions on acupuncture continued resulting in the decline of traditional Chinese medicine.
- 1949 - Rise of Mao Zedong- poor rural healthcare created need for 'Barefoot Doctors' 1

Interest in Acupuncture Begins in the United States

- On a trip to China with President Richard Nixon, NY Times reporter, James Reston, suffered appendicitis
- 1971- Front page of NY Times, James Reston reported on his emergency appendectomy in China - post op pain relieved by 3 needles?
- 3 months later a report in Journal of American Medical Association³
- National Institutes of Health sponsored physicians to study Chinese health care and research acupuncture⁴ (NICAM)

Different Types of Acupuncture

- Traditional Chinese Acupuncture (TCM)
- Medical Acupuncture
- Japanese Acupuncture
- Korean Hand Acupuncture
- Scalp Acupuncture
- Auricular Acupuncture and Auriculotherapy
- Veterinary Acupuncture

Does It Work? - Research -

- Auricular acupuncture in the treatment of acute pain syndromes: A pilot study (2006)**. Pilot study of 87 active duty military personnel with acute pain- the acupuncture group showed a 23% reduction in pain versus the standard medical care group⁵
- Efficacy of Auricular Therapy for Pain Management: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (2014)**. Meta-analysis of 13 studies on Auricular Therapy (Acupressure, Acupuncture and Electro-acupuncture) showed a greater decrease in pain score than sham or control group⁶
- A Randomized Exploratory Study to evaluate Two Acupuncture Methods for the treatment of Headaches Associated with traumatic Brain Injury (2016)**. Post concussive headaches in active duty service members. Randomized exploratory study evaluated: usual care, TCM and Auricular Acupuncture. Acupuncture improved headache related quality of life more than usual care⁷

Research

(continued)

- Auricular acupuncture for chronic pain and insomnia: A randomized clinical trial (2018)**. 32 participants were randomized to either usual care vs usual care plus one treatment with BFA. The BFA group showed a statistically significant reduction in both chronic pain and insomnia vs the usual care group⁸
- Clinical observation in the Temple VA headache clinic- acupuncture used daily to stop the headache and general pain reduction, improve mood and help with sleep. No use of narcotics
- Clinical anecdotal observation at NIH – across the spectrum of diverse problems – success with pain reduction, muscle relaxation, lessening of acute presentations and improvement in sleep and stress reduction – no use of narcotics
- Further research is ongoing, some of the difficulty is having a control group

Acupuncture Systemic Reviews

- NIH systemic review 2012
 - Acupuncture is **effective for chronic pain treatment** and can be considered a reasonable option
 - Chronic pain to include back and neck pain, osteoarthritis, chronic headache and shoulder pain⁹
- Cochrane systemic review 2016
 - Acupuncture **should be considered for migraine patients for prevention**, particularly if having adverse effects from medications
 - Acupuncture effect size was **statically significantly** larger in real acupuncture verses sham acupuncture **for chronic headaches**
 - Acupuncture **should be considered for treating episodic or chronic tension headaches**¹⁰

Auriculotherapy/Auricular Acupuncture Theory

- Utilizes the ear as a homunculus/microcosm representation of human body with specific corresponding acupuncture points on ear
- 12 Meridians pass through ears
- Embryological development of the ear allows access to brain and subsequently the body organs
- Stimulation of nerve endings sends signals to the brain and then to the body
- By observing the ear one can identify specific issues/disease processes¹¹

History of Auriculotherapy

The slide features two diagrams of an ear. The left diagram, titled 'Inverted Fetus Pattern', shows a fetus curled in a fetal position with its head at the bottom, mapped onto the ear's surface. The right diagram, titled 'Somatotopic Ear Map', shows a human body with various parts labeled and mapped onto the ear's surface. A small inset image shows a photograph of an ear with a similar mapping.

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Early Documented Use of Auriculotherapy

- Egypt, Greece and Rome 500 BC to 100AD - Hippocrates and Galen used ear rings and other forms of ear stimulation
- Persians in 200AD after the fall of Rome, recorded cauterization for sciatica pain
- 1500 to 1700 the Dutch East India Company
- 1957 Dr. Paul Nogier (French) noticed scarring on patients ears, which was used for the treatment of sciatica¹¹

Early Documented Use (continued)

- 1958 the Chinese learned of Dr. Nogier's charts and verified the accuracy of the points¹¹
- 1980 - Dr. Terry Oleson from UCLA verified the scientific accuracy of the auricular diagnosis¹²
- 1990 WHO standardized the terminology¹¹
- 2001 Col. Richard Niemtow, MD, PhD develops 'Battlefield Acupuncture'¹¹

Auriculotherapy/Auricular Acupuncture

The slide contains a detailed diagram of an ear with various points labeled. The labels include: Head C, Arm C, Thorax C, Cervical C, Shoulder C, Hip C, Sacral C, Lumbar Spine, Thoracic Spine, Cervical Spine, Inner Ear E, Middle Ear E, Outer Ear E, Tragus, Auricle, Eye Disorder I, Eye Disorder II, Dental Anesthesia, Heart C, Lung C, Liver C, Gallbladder C, Spleen C, Pancreas C, Stomach C, Small Intestine C, Large Intestine C, Bladder C, Kidney C, Adrenal Gland C, Testis C, Ovary C, Uterus C, Vagina C, Penis C, Prostate Gland C, Thyroid Gland C, Parathyroid Gland C, Pituitary Gland C, Hypothalamus C, Hypophysis C, Pineal Gland C, Hypocampus C, Amygdala C, Cerebellum C, Pons C, Medulla C, Spinal Cord C, Cervical C, Thoracic C, Lumbar C, Sacral C, Hip C, Shoulder C, Neck C, Back C, Shoulder C, Elbow C, Wrist C, Hand C, Finger C, Thumb C, Index C, Middle C, Ring C, Little C, Ear C, Eye Disorder I, Eye Disorder II, Upper Jaw, Lower Jaw, Dental Anesthesia, and Pain.

With permission from Terry Oleson, Ph.D

Anatomy of An Ear- A Guide to Finding the Points

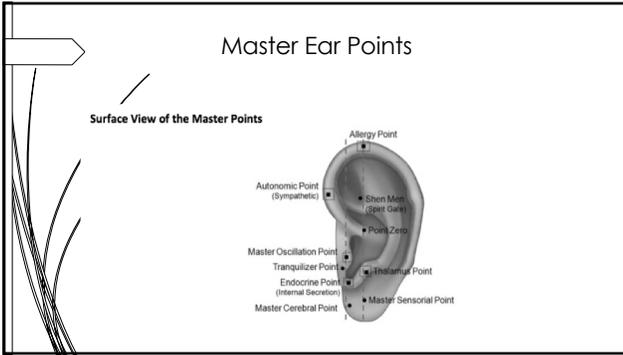
The slide shows several anatomical diagrams of the ear. One diagram is a cross-section of the ear canal showing the ear drum and ossicles. Another diagram shows the external ear with various parts labeled. A third diagram shows the ear with a grid overlay, indicating point locations. A small photograph of an ear is also included.

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Auricular Zones – More Specific Point Locations

The slide displays three diagrams of an ear, each divided into zones. The first diagram is labeled 'Surface Zones' and shows the outer ear divided into several zones. The second diagram is labeled 'Hidden Zones' and shows the inner ear divided into several zones. The third diagram is labeled 'Posterior Zones' and shows the back of the ear divided into several zones.

With permission from Terry Oleson, Ph.D



Auriculotherapy/ Auricular Acupuncture use

- Treatment for substance abuse (NADA protocol) and more recently for PTSD, TBI, and battlefield acupuncture (BFA)
- Wide range of disorders to include headache, chronic back pain, asthma, allergic rhinitis, dental pain, anxiety, insomnia
- Points can be needled, seeded, electrically stimulated
- Allows quick and easy access for treatment
- Treatments take as little as 20 minutes, provide relief for days to weeks
- Easy to learn¹¹

Relative Value Unit (RVU) for acupuncture

Acupuncture without electric stimulation

- 97810- 0.6 RVU's - first 15 minutes
- 97811- 0.5 RVU's -additional 15 minutes

Acupuncture with electric stimulation

- 97813 – 0.65 RVU's - first 15 minutes
- 97814 – 0.5 RVU's – additional 15 minutes

How big are the needles?

How Tiny Is An Acupuncture Needle?

Auricular Exam

- General health history, PE as needed
- Education and informed consent obtained
- Examine ears closely – dry patches, lesions, congestion and redness
- May palpate or use point finder to determine irregularities or painful spots
- May measure skin resistance with electrical probes

Precautions

Should not be performed on patients who are:

- Weak/exhausted
- Very hungry or have just eaten or drank alcohol
- Pregnant
- Under 7 years of age
- Anemia
- Elderly – perform with care
- Adverse to needles – use acupressure or seeds

Side Effects

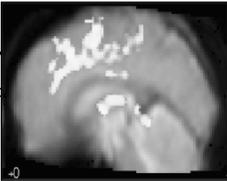
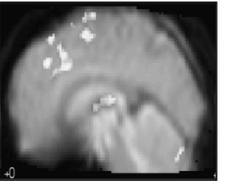
- Bruising, bleeding at the insertion site
- Infection at placement of the needle (very rare)
- 'Needle Shock' /AKA vaso-vagal reaction
 - Dizziness
 - Nausea
 - Sweating
 - Numbness
- Remove needles and allow patient to rest
- Occasionally symptoms increase but then resolve

Easy Auricular Acupuncture Protocols

- National Acupuncture Detoxification Association (NADA)
 - Lung, Liver, Kidney, Shen Men, Autonomic Point
- Battlefield Acupuncture (BFA)
 - Cingulate gyrus, Thalamus, Omega 2, Point Zero, Shen Men
- Auricular Trauma Protocol (ATP)
 - Master Cerebral, Amygdala, Hypothalamus, Hippocampus, Insula, Vagus, Point Zero, Shen Men¹³

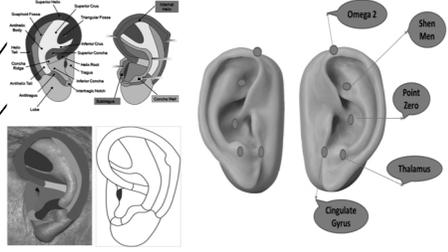
BFA
Science

Anterior Cingulate Cortex and Thalamic Nuclei

| Pain stimulation | Pain stimulation w/acupuncture |
|---|---|
|  |  |

"With Permission from Dr Richard C. Niemtow"

Ear Anatomy and BFA points



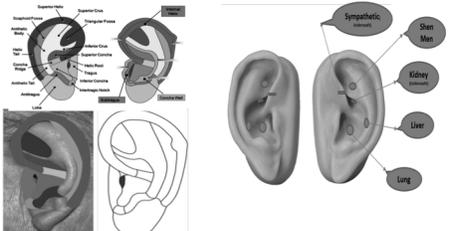
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Significance of Points/BFA

- **Cingulate gyrus**- memory and emotion with pain
- **Thalamus**- Communication of nervous system to cerebral cortex (Grand Central station), reducing shock, restoring tranquility
- **Omega 2** Psychosomatic d/o & pain in limbs
- **Point zero**- General body homeostasis/autonomic brain controlling visceral organs
- **Shen Men**- Parasympathetic switch, alleviates excessive sensitivity, calming, pain reduction, insomnia – supports other auricular reflex points

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Ear Anatomy and NADA points



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Significance of Points/NADA

- **Sympathetic/Autonomic point-** fight or flight- Balances, strong analgesic and relaxant, calms the spirit
- **Shen men-** spirit gate/calms the mind, opens the heart, reduces B/P, alleviates pain
- **Kidney-** relieves fear, allows one to hear positive
- **Liver-** anger/relieves muscle cramps aids in clear thinking, relieves depression, helps to find direction
- **Lung-** regulation of grief/sadness, provides inspiration¹⁴

History of National Acupuncture Detoxification Association (NADA) and the NADA protocol

- Auricular acupuncture first evolved by Dr Nogier in the 1950's
- Dr. Wen and Dr. Cheung (Hong Kong) published their findings on using electric stim to the ear and body for opium addiction, 1973
- Dr. Michael Smith expanded ear points and utilized it at Lincoln Hospital (South Bronx) for drug and alcohol abuse, 1983
- NADA was founded by Dr. Smith and others in 1985
- *Not a stand alone treatment- facilitates other treatments*¹⁴⁻¹⁷

Consideration of use

- Substance abuse to include Alcohol, nicotine, cocaine and opioids
- Recovery from trauma- helps with sleep, which may help with processing recent events
- Chronic pain reduction
- Safe in pregnancy
- works well in groups
- Cost effective and safe

Additional uses of NADA

- NADA helpful for stress reduction, improving sleep and coping
 - 9/11 attacks- stress reduction clinic¹⁴⁻¹⁷
 - Burmese (India and Thailand) refugee camps, 2001¹⁴⁻¹⁷
 - Gulf Coast recovery – hurricanes Katrina and Rita, 2005¹⁴⁻¹⁷
 - Kashmir earthquake and other disaster and relief efforts around the world¹⁴⁻¹⁷
- Richmond VA- administers 16 sessions for those starting the chronic pain program- helpful for pain reduction and the ability to focus on other pain reduction modalities

Who can be certified to be a acu-detox specialist?

- Under the Texas Medical Board the following may be certified:
 - Licensed Social Worker
 - Licensed Professional Counselor
 - Licensed Psychologist
 - Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor
 - Licensed Registered Nurse
 - Licensed Vocational Nurse
- *Medical Doctors do not need certification to administer this protocol*

Current Texas Law

- Acu-detox specialist may practice acupuncture only:
 - To the extent allowed by rules adopted by the medical board for the treatment of alcoholism, substance abuse or chemical dependency; and
 - Under the supervision of a licensed acupuncturist or physician (may be telephonic supervision)
- The Texas NADA group is working on language modifications, to current acu-detox law, to include Mental health/Behavioral health issues
- <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/OC/pdf/OC.205.pdf> (pg 21)

Certifying Process

- Complete a 30 hour NADA course (usually completed over a long weekend)
- Complete 40 encounters under the supervision of a certified acu-detox specialist/can usually be done in a group settings
- Attend 2 AA meetings
- Submit all to NADA for a *Certificate of Training Completion*
- Apply to the medical board and pay a \$52.00 fee, once the above is completed

Case Reviews



Battlefield Acupuncture

Refractory Migraine

History and Treatment

- 28 year old active duty soldier was being seen for a 2 weeks migraine that did not resolved even after ER treatment with IV medication
- BFA protocol placed in both ears and allowed the patient to rest in a chair for 20 minutes
- Migraine was completely resolved
- The soldier left pain free without any adverse side effects

NADA

Acute opioid withdrawal

History and Treatment

- 40 yr old female with chronic pain and migraines. Weaning off oral opioids and titrating up on a internal pain pump. Was being seen for Botox administration. Appeared uncomfortable with irritability, jitteriness. Complained of nausea and a diffuse headache, appeared uncomfortable
- Placed NADA protocol in each ear. Symptoms resolved within 5 minutes, Botox administered to a very calm and headache free patient

Back Pain

Acute

Occupational Injury – Back Strain History

- 44 yr. old male helping to transport a 300lb. anesthetized pig back to pen when pig suddenly awoke and in the struggle that ensued the employee injured his back.
- Presents in acute pain, unable to find a position of comfort, unable to stand or sit, lying on side without relief.
- Healthy, alert male: No meds, NKA, PMH: NC
- Pain: 10/10 P: 96 BP: 156/84

Back Strain - Treatment

- NP and PT unable to exam employee in current state of pain – restless in fetal position
- Needled points BFA plus muscle relaxation, sacral and lumbar spine in only one ear – encouraged to deep breathe – cold pack to back
- In less than 5 minutes, suddenly pulled himself to the side of the bed, stood up still bending slightly forward and said (smiling) "you're a witch" his pain had gone to 5/10 with increased mobility and ability to withstand further evaluation P: 76 BP: 132/74
- Was able to treat with NSAIDs and Physical therapy with Auriculotherapy for added pain management. On light duty returned to full duty in 2 weeks.

Words of Wisdom

" Anyone who is trained and licensed to give injections or do sutures could learn to use a few simple acupuncture protocols in a matter of weeks, and could relieve an enormous amount of suffering." ¹⁸

Acupuncture is like noodles: community based acupuncture concept

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