

Acupuncture: ancient or hi-tech?

BY REHAM ABDELAZIZ

Acupuncture, an ancient Chinese medical procedure, is used to treat pain and induce relief from many disorders. "Classical" acupuncture involves the insertion of fine needles into the skin at specific points on the body. This is believed to restore the "vital energy" flowing between internal organs via specific channels called meridians, which are blocked by disease.

Acupuncture's main use is to treat arthritis, headaches, and migraines. It is also used to treat ulcers, hypertension, appendicitis, and asthma.

This procedure's effectiveness has surprised western scientists and has brought this previously unacceptable Chinese tradition across the globe to join other forms of alternative medicine such as meditation and chiropractic therapy.

Today, acupuncture is believed

to stimulate the body's production of endorphins, which are natural pain relievers. The endorphins prevent pain messages from reaching the brain, thereby relieving pain and relaxing the body.

In more recent years, the knowledge of anatomy, physiology, and pathology has been combined with acupuncture techniques to give a modern approach known as "Anatomical" acupuncture. This approach has been adapted by many western-trained acupuncture therapists.

Modern technology has introduced various applications to acupuncture. Electro-acupuncture involves the use of low voltage electrical impulses sent through acupuncture needles. Another technique, transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS), involves the electrical stimulation of the body through electrodes and works best when applied at acu-

puncture points.

Lately, acupuncture clinics have become more widespread throughout Canada and the United States. Some insurance companies are already covering acupuncture treatment if prescribed by a physician.

Here in Nova Scotia, a degree in medicine is not a necessary prerequisite to open an acupuncture clinic. Instead, individuals with advanced qualifications and experience could practice acupuncture. The type and number of sessions of treatment vary according to individual cases.

With its roots in ancient China, it is beyond belief that this four thousand-year-old tradition is slowly being incorporated into mainstream health care services. While the biomedical health care system disputes the credibility of alternative health models, acupuncture breaks new ground as we step into the twenty-first century.

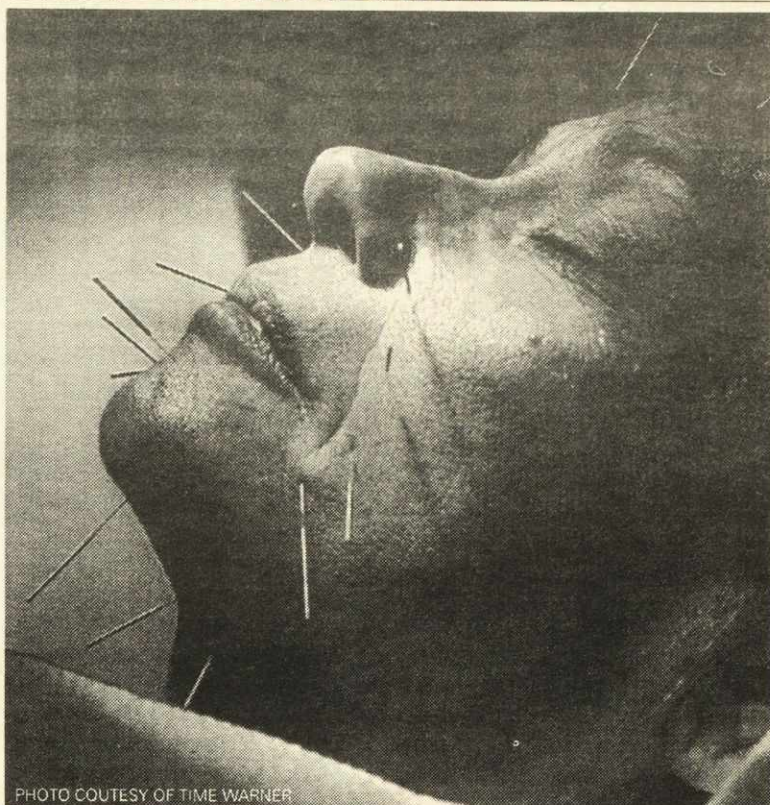


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Student with disability attends class via computer

BY SIMONE A. BROWN

TORONTO (CUP) — A mobility impaired student is the first to test a pilot project, launched at the University of Toronto, that will allow disabled students to take their classes from the comfort of their own homes.

Manon Le Paven, a third-year political science student, suffers from myasthenia, a muscle-weakening illness that prevents her from walking without assistance.

From her home computer, she has been using desktop video-conferencing that lets her participate in one of her political science courses at the university.

According to Linda Petty, U of T's assistant manager at the Adaptive Technology Resource Centre, a computer in Le Paven's home is connected to a second computer in the classroom through an ISDN line, which allows data to be transferred at 10 times the rate of a regular modem.

Both computers are equipped with a camera. Using a special program called Intel Proshare and the ISDN line, Le Paven and the professor are able to hear and see each other.

"With this system, [Le Paven] can go into her living room and turn on the computer and attend the class. She can participate in discussions, take notes, and ask questions," she said.

Even though she isn't physically present, La Paven says, she still feels like she is an active student in the class.

"It's just like I was in the class," she said. "I'm participating as equally as if I was there."

Petty says video-conferencing is already used in many facilities on campus but this particular application has never been used here or at any other university. So far the project has been extremely successful, she adds.

Le Paven says without the project she would not be able to complete her degree. She says that because of her disease, she

often feels very weak. This, in addition to recent cuts to Wheeltrans service, have made it nearly impossible for her to commute to school.

"The video-conferencing is saving my life. I would not have been able to go to class without it," said Le Paven.

David Neelands, assistant vice-president of student affairs at U of T, says the program is a great opportunity for disabled students.

"I think it's a wonderful opportunity. It really does make a difference for people where mobility is limited," he said.

Neelands says there are many students with special needs that are unable to attend university because of their disability or illness. Some people aren't even able to use a wheelchair, he says.

But now with U of T's increasing use of adaptive technology, such as desktop video-conferencing, the university and its services will be more accessible to them, Neelands adds.

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