

Acupuncture and Acupuncture Meridian Assessment: Journey to East by West

By Simon Yu, MD

What is the difference between Acupuncture and Acupuncture Meridian Assessment? Acupuncture has been known for alleviating pain based on using therapeutic needles at specific acupuncture points. The acupuncture points have proven lower electrical resistance than the surrounding skin areas.

These are the entry points to the “meridians” which are specific paths of energy flow through the body. Different meridians include energy flow through different organs, muscle, tissue, and joints. The appropriate acupuncture point will balance the energy (Chi), restore the blocked energy flow (meridians), and relieve the pain.

According to the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) of the U.S. National Institutes of Health, “Acupuncture is one of the oldest, most commonly used medical procedures in the world. Originating in China more than 2,000 years ago, acupuncture began to become better known in the United States in 1971, when New York Times reporter James Reston wrote about how doctors in China used needles to ease his pain after surgery.” The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved acupuncture needles for use by licensed practitioners in 1996.

Acupuncture Meridian Assessment developed in Germany is quite different than Acupuncture. Europeans, especially the French and Germans, have been more open to acupuncture than other countries. They’ve been practicing and studying the acupuncture techniques originally brought in from Jesuit missionary priests 200 years ago.

Acupuncture Meridian Assessment is a diagnostic tool developed by Dr. Reinhold Voll in Germany. It is used to evaluate individual meridians based on Acupuncture points and principles. It provides unique, precise readings of electrical resistance at Acupuncture points through the use of an Ohm meter. These readings evaluate the energy levels through the meridians at the selected points.

The outcome of the merger of the Western analytical mind and the Eastern philosophy of Acupuncture has been beautifully captured by Dr. Reinhold Voll who was an Internist and acupuncturist over 50 years ago. Dr. Voll’s new concept of evaluation of acupuncture meridians revolutionized the entire field of Acupuncture.

His efforts led to a new, distinct medical field for studying Bio-Cybernetic Energy Systems of the human body in Europe. The method and device developed by Dr. Voll is called Electro-acupuncture according to Voll (EAV), Electro Dermal Screening (EDS), or Acupuncture Meridian Assessment. (See my web site, in the Articles section, for an article on Acupuncture Meridian Assessment.)

The NCCAM reports on a study conducted in 2002 that showed “...an estimated 8.2 million U.S. adults had ever used acupuncture.” With the acceptance of Acupuncture by the general public, medical school education has finally caught up to public demand.

The Stanford Medical School offered a 300 hour course for acupuncture training for medical doctors for the first time ever in 2006. Acupuncture finally became part of main stream medical training from the most prestigious medical school in the U.S. Previously, the UCLA medical school offered an acupuncture course during the early stages of medical acupuncture training.

I have been practicing Acupuncture Meridian Assessment for over 15 years. In 2006, I completed the Medical Acupuncture training from the Stanford Medical School. It seems odd for me that I had traveled extensively to Germany to study Acupuncture Meridian Assessment over 15 years ago.

And then I finally go to California to study Acupuncture from the Stanford Medical School. It seems as if I am learning backward. It is as if I am taking a longer journey to the East by the West rather than going directly to the East.

East and West: Acupuncture and Acupuncture Meridian Assessment. Two distinct, old, and new medical fields. Yet they are so intimately interrelated. I have been privileged to study both Acupuncture and Acupuncture Meridian Assessment in the reverse order. I have the opportunity to practice medicine based on the Eastern holistic approach and the Western analytical approach of understanding the human body by studying both fields.

Eastern philosophy looks at the human body as a microcosm of the Universe. Western medical science dissects and analyzes the human body as bio-mechanical and bio-chemical processes. It looks into the cellular and molecular levels but stops before going into the energy levels of the body.

New research conducted by leading scientists from Germany is looking at the human body as a bio-cybernetic network of photon energy fields. This research was started by the pioneering efforts of Dr. Reinhold Voll and is continued by the pioneering efforts into new areas of thinking by bio-physicist Fritz-Albert Popp, Ph.D.

What a beautiful concept if we can integrate these two fields of medicine in medical schools to train the new young doctors! I believe it is possible when the public demands that doctors treat them with an integration of Eastern and Western medicine. Finally, then, there will be a quantum leap for the advancement of medicine and understanding of the essence of Life. Meanwhile, I will keep going to East by West.

(Note: The quotes from the NCCAM were taken from this web page <http://nccam.nih.gov/health/acupuncture> which may have changed since the time of this writing.)

Dr. Simon Yu, M.D. is a Board Certified Internist. He practices Internal Medicine with an emphasis on Alternative Medicine to use the best each has to offer. For more articles and information about alternative medicine as well as patient success stories visit his web site at www.preventionandhealing.com or call Prevention and Healing, Inc., 314-432-7802. You can also attend a free monthly presentation and discussion by Dr. Yu on Alternative Medicine at his office on the second Tuesday each month at 6:30 pm. Please call to verify the date and reserve your space.



Simon Yu, M.D.
Prevention and Healing, Inc.
11710 Old Ballas Rd., Suite 205
St. Louis, MO 63141
314-432-7802
www.preventionandhealing.com

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