

How do Homeopathy and Acupuncture Really Work?

An important mechanism in Homeopathy and Acupuncture and its importance and implications in Veterinary medicine

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My background is that I am educated as a homeopath, an acupuncturist and as a veterinarian, and have had my own clinic for both humans and animals since 1981. I am a strict believer in the great possibilities of these alternative modalities, and I have treated patients with combinations of acupuncture, homeopathy and herbs about 150000 times.

Most Acupuncturists and Homeopaths agree that homeopathy and acupuncture work through information and regulation to/of the somatic processes. Acupuncture and homeopathy stimulate the self-healing mechanisms of the body. Many other medicines do not do that, for example penicillin works by its own antibacterial actions that can inhibit or kill bacteria within the body as well as in-vitro (outside the body). This is not the case with acupuncture and homeopathy. To be of therapeutic value, they must modulate the body's homeostatic processes, i.e. they must target the body's self-healing mechanisms.

The mechanism of action: How acupuncture and homeopathy work (how they stimulate the body's self-healing processes) has been debated in depth through the years. Many mechanisms have been suggested. Some of these have been identified, especially in research on acupuncture. Regardless of what mechanisms have been suggested, the end result is always that the body's self-healing mechanisms must be activated.

Some worrying observations: During the years I have observed some paradoxical anomalies between my clinical results and those of others, as I am sure you have also. Those that have bothered me are discussed below.

Paradoxical observations in acupuncture:

1. Most veterinary acupuncturists, who use AP or gold implants at the acupoints, find them to be most successful and effective to treat canine hip dysplasia (HD). Clinical experience from several colleagues, with overall success rates of 80-90%, supports this opinion. Recently, although they used slightly different methods of implantation, three independent uncontrolled retrospective clinical studies on the effectiveness of gold implants to treat canine HD in 218 dogs in Denmark (the late Jens Klitsgaard, 100 dogs), Norway (Are

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Thoresen, 50 dogs) and Germany (Erhard Schulze, 68 dogs) reported a clinical success rate of near 90%. However, the clinical response to gold bead implantation AP to treat canine HD was evaluated also in two double-blind studies. One was in Finland by Anna Hielm et al (1998) and the other was in the USA by Bebchuk et al (1998). Also there will shortly be published a third article by Gry Jäger (Oslo 2002). Anna Hielm gave me a summary of her article in Finnish. The dogs were treated in a double-blinded study; the owners did the evaluation. Both groups of dogs showed positive results but there was no difference between the two groups. Bebchuk's study was a communication from his university. He also treated the dogs in a double-blind study but the evaluation was objective; it used force-plates to measure the force exerted by the dogs on the treated limbs. Neither group of dogs improved, nor was there a difference between the two groups. The dogs in the treatment group tended to get worse. Gry Jäger's article will conclude (as reported at the IVAS Congress in Spietz) that there was a positive and statistical difference between the two groups, but much less than one may expect according to the results reported by Klitsgaard, Schulze and Thoresen. All three studies show the same result: gold-implantation in the hip area had little or no positive effect on the dogs and some dogs in Bebchuk's study even got worse! So we see that a very successful therapy in the clinic is almost without effect in a double-blind trial.

2. A good friend and colleague in Norway has had good results in his acupuncture therapy in recent years,. He then hired helpers, colleagues and animal-caretakers, who did not believe in acupuncture. After two years he told me; "Are, I do not understand what is happening, acupuncture does not seem to work for me any more".

3. A colleague in the US said the following: "Twenty-five years ago I had great results treating just GB29, 30, and BL54 in canine hip dysplasia. If I treat just these points today, I would see very little improvement in my patients. I agree that focus and mindset is a major part in one's treatment protocol and point selection. In the treatment of hip dysplasia, you (i.e. Are) place a much higher degree of power on the use of Liv 3 than I do; therefore Liv 3 works for you but not for me. I treat many conditions for which I use only one needle, or implant only one point, but my focus is different from when I am treating hip dysplasia. We are getting back to focus and intent, the two most important factors in acupuncture. A German colleague answered to this: "Some years ago I had to open the Du Mai with Gb 41 first in about 80% of my horse patients. Today it happens about once a week. Who changed? The horses or I?"

Paradoxical observations in homeopathy:

1.. Beneviste's investigations showed that the results differed when he made the trials alone versus in the presence of sceptics. He suggested that the presence of the critical persons "zeroed" the results of the investigations.

2.. Later, Professor Kröplin at the University of Stuttgart showed clearly that mood-changes of the scientists changed the results in sensitive crystallisation by such a degree (up to 47%) that the claims of Beneviste no longer seem so far-fetched. (Kröplin 2001).

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3. Many investigations showed that homeopathy works sometimes, and sometimes not (Coulter 1980, Linde 1997, Vaarst 1996). Also many homeopathic studies show that results are very good in the clinic but are bad in double-blinded trials.

Paradoxical observations in biodynamic agriculture:

1. Biodynamic agriculture uses homeopathic substances called the "Remedies". As in homeopathy, Biodynamic agriculture has given paradoxical results in practical situations; some people have had good results but others not. Many farmers report good results but controlled trials have shown little or no effect.
2. In farming I have often heard that methods or remedies that clearly work in the field, totally lose their effect when submitted to double-blind investigations.

Paradoxical observations in other areas of science:

1. Viktor Schauberger, between the first and the second world wars, conducted many interesting trials and studies in Austria on the peculiarities of water. His results amazed many scientists, and even Hitler ordered him to work for his war-machine. Later, it emerged that it was almost impossible to replicate Schauberger's results but few have suggested that he was cheating.
2. Sir Jagadis Chandra Bose, one of the most famous scientists in India, showed with his self-constructed machines that plants and metals had a soul-life of their own. The problem was that nobody could replicate his results. My interpretation of his trials is that his own psyche (intention) was so strong that it influenced his results.
- 3.. Professor Kröplin from Stuttgart has shown that the patterns of crystallisations and the forms of drops falling into water was up to 48% influenced by the emotions of the scientists. This would explain the results of many great "alternative" scientists, such as Schauberger, Bose and even Steiner.
4. Quantum-physics also indicates that the observer influences the observed results; the scientists influence the outcome from a given experimental protocol, and the variation between their results is unexplained. Many quantum-physicists accept this today; however, Werner Heisenberg's uncertainly-equation may explain the differences practically and theoretically. Here is a quote from "The Tao of Physics" by Fritjof Capra: "In modern physics, the question of consciousness has arisen in connection with the observation of atomic phenomena can only be understood as links in a chain of processes, the end of which lies in the consciousness of the human observer". In the words of Eugene Wigner: "It was not possible to formulate the laws of quantum theory in a fully consistent way without reference to consciousness." Wigner and others have argued that the explicit inclusion of human consciousness may be an essential aspect of future theories of matter.

These concepts all indicate that the qualities of the therapist may influence the outcome of a treatment or experiment, as modern quantum physics has suggested. Many serious AP books from China expressed this opinion, for example:

- Chapter 26 of the Suwen: "... That which differentiates craftsmen is [to observe] what is not manifested to be observed externally and that all [others] cannot observe. Therefore observing that which is obscure means seeing that which has no form and tasting that which has no flavour. This [capacity] seems to be divine".
- Scheid & Bensky: In pre-Han China, yì (intention) was considered a pre-requisite of the knowledge and understanding required for and derived from the divination practices based on the I-jing. "Yì is what the sages used to search profundity and study the all-encompassing. As it is profound, it can penetrate throughout the purpose of the subcelestial realm. As it is all encompassing, it can penetrate throughout the affairs of the subcelestial realm. As it is divine, it is fast but never hurries; it arrives but never travels".
- Zhenjiu Dacheng: "The importance of AP lies in concentration of the mind"
- Guo Yuzhi: "needling ability rests with whether [acupuncturist] can focus his attention on the heart and hand during the needling".
- Xu Yinzong: "Medicine is Yì (intention); it is in one's thoughts and deliberations.

Conclusions:

1. The conclusion, that the qualities of the therapist, especially Yì (intention), may influence the outcome of a treatment may explain why homeopaths and doctors disagree, and never will agree. If the therapist's intent, formed by years of study and clinical conviction, really is the most important aspect of clinical medicine, it may explain very well why scientists and doctors (who rely on dispassionate randomized controlled trials for evidence of clinical efficiency) disagree with homeopaths and acupuncturists about the reality of their clinical results. Double-blinded studies cannot allow for the influence of Yì (intention), and must show little difference between the treated and control groups than in a clinical situation where focused positive intent is present.
2. As veterinarians, when we treat animals, we must pay much more attention to our own Yì, and to the psyche of our patients.
3. We must abandon double-blind trials in all investigations on therapies that involve the self-healing

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properties of the body

4. We must realize that the results of "great spirits", like the people mentioned above (and also Rudolf Steiner), cannot be duplicated, and may even have been the results of their intention and belief.

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