



Healing powers



In the east acupuncture is used during open heart surgery, but here many are still unaware of its benefits: Vale Life talks to local expert Rhiannon Griffiths

Imagine having a chronic migraine that lasted for weeks. When Rhiannon Griffiths was 17 her grandfather passed away and she developed a throbbing headache that could not be shifted. Having prescribed a variety of tablets to no avail, Rhiannon's doctor eventually sent her for a brain scan - happily it showed no cause for concern, but the migraine persisted.

A friend suggested acupuncture, which being a needlephobic, Rhiannon was not keen to try! However desperation had set in and she bravely decided to give the treatment a go.

Although nervous at first Rhiannon was relieved to find the experience was not at all as she had imagined. Acupuncture needles are completely different from the hollow hypodermics used in syringes for injections or blood samples. They are much finer and have a point, so they don't cut the skin like a hypodermic and you shouldn't even feel them going in.

"You feel the needle connecting with the energy flow," says Rhiannon, "A dull ache and the feeling that something is being sucked out - a sort of drawing or tingling

sensation."

Much to her relief the acupuncture cured her migraine and Rhiannon became interested in the ancient Chinese medicine, returning to it for help with a bout of stress and anxiety suffered during her university days in Bournemouth.

After a spell working as a media planner in London, Rhiannon decided to retrain as an acupuncturist: "Acupuncture is a form of Chinese Medicine that works to harmo-

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nise the mind, body and emotions, a holistic practice that seeks to diagnose the root cause of illness, and address it by balancing internal energy, or Qi," explains Rhiannon. "The ultra fine needles are inserted into specific points, restoring the proper functioning of organs, body systems and substances,"

There are two dominant styles of acupuncture practised in the UK, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and Five Element acupuncture. Rhiannon practises a

combined style, as taught at the College of Integrated Chinese Medicine, from where she graduated after a four year course with an impressive first class honours degree.

Five Element acupuncture is based on the movement of energy within nature and the seasons. The relationships and interactions between the Five Elements - Water, Wood, Fire, Earth and Metal - mirror how these energies move within our own bodies, and help identify our core imbalances, constitutional weaknesses, and the root cause of illness.

"We all have one Element that is like our default setting," says Rhiannon, "We may exhibit exaggerated patterns, feelings and behaviours of that particular Element if we become unbalanced or ill.

"Emotions such as fear, worry, grief, anger and lack of joy are considered causes of illness, as well as trauma, poor nutrition and infection - all disturb the natural flow of Qi. By harmonising the Five Elements, acupuncture stimulates the body's own natural healing, enhancing quality of life on many levels. It may be that we haven't felt quite right for some time, and this is where acupuncture can bring us 'back to being ourselves' again.

“Increased wellbeing, improved sleep and renewed energy levels may be the first changes a patient notices, with an improvement in the main complaint soon after.”

The TCM style of acupuncture supports organ systems and the physical body. It is effective in treating acute and chronic illness, including conditions such as allergies, migraine, asthma and arthritis.

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During an initial consultation, the patient is asked a wide range of questions about current symptoms, medical and family history, diet and digestive system, sleeping patterns and emotional state. This is to gain an accurate, holistic view of the patient's health. The pulse may be taken on both wrists and the tongue examined.

Points at which to apply the acupuncture are then specifically prescribed for the individual patient. They may not be close to the part of the body where the problem is experienced as there is an extensive network of channels through which energy flows around the body.

Diet and lifestyle advice may also be given, to create a more effective overall treatment plan.

About Rhiannon

- Rhiannon grew up in Haddenham attended Aylesbury High School and has worked in the Book House at Thame and more recently at the Thame Gazette office.

- Having practised in Reading and Buckinghamshire, she has returned to live in Haddenham and her acupuncture practice is now based at The White House in Thame.

- Rhiannon is a member of the British Acupuncture Council (MBAcC) and serves on their Student Services Committee, an important link between acupuncture's regulatory body and the teaching institutions.

- Whilst treating a broad range of conditions, including infertility, IBS, ME, menstrual and menopausal problems, Rhiannon has a special interest in the holistic treatment of emotional issues such as stress, anxiety and depression.

- Visit her website at: www.rhiannongriffiths.com or call her on 01844 220227 to find out how acupuncture could help you.