

“Resolving persistent health problems often requires the doctor to see a problem from several points of view, as if you were five different doctors at once: one who understands neurological issues, one who understands the acupuncture system, another who is focused on immune function, body chemistry, etc.”

By Dr. Samuel Yanuck

One of the most important and effective ways to help patients resolve persistent health problems is by combining treatments from East and West. Most persistent health problems are caused by several factors at once, rather than single causes. One of the most important things to do in treating these patients is to identify the underlying causes of their problems and the ways those causal factors reinforce each other. This is like understanding the threads and intersections in a spider web. Once this underlying pattern has been understood, each factor in the web can be matched to a treatment element that applies to it.

Some of these elements are Eastern (meridian system treatments, chiefly). Some are Western (neurology, exercise, nutritional biochemistry, chiropractic adjusting, cranio-sacral therapy, and others). Patients with chronic pain, fatigue, digestive problems, allergies, headaches, or other chronic problems achieve remarkable health outcomes when the multiple factors driving their problems are identified and addressed effectively by combining these treatment elements correctly.

We are fortunate that major universi-

ties and other institutions are producing so much excellent research on the relationships between the acupuncture meridian system, the nervous system, immune system, endocrine system, and other key clinical factors. This knowledge allows my colleagues and me to understand difficult problems and make connections that were not understandable even a few years ago.

Seeing these connections makes it easier to avoid getting trapped into seeing all problems from the perspective of one approach to treatment (the old “have a hammer, see everything as a nail” problem). Resolving persistent health problems often requires the doctor to see a problem from several points of view, as if you were five different doctors at once: one who understands neurological issues, one who understands the acupuncture system, another who is focused on immune function, body chemistry, etc.

ODD SYMPTOMS: A CASE OF EAST & WEST

Jill had profound fatigue, back pain, and allergies. She had seen several doctors and finally been told that she was depressed. And, she had a rather odd symptom: when she was especially stressed, the left side of her tongue would swell up. Whenever she told a doctor about it, she’d be told she was imagining it. Then she had an episode of tongue swelling while getting her teeth cleaned. The dental hygienist pointed out that the left side of her tongue was bigger than the right side, so Jill knew she was not imagining it.

Eventually, Jill found her way to my office. She told me about the fatigue, back pain, and allergies. I always just sit and listen when patients tell their stories, because they almost always say things that help me crack the case. So, when it was clear to her that I was actually listening to her and taking what she said seriously, she told me about the tongue swelling. She was almost

apologetic in her description, because it was an odd symptom. But it wasn’t odd to me.

It turns out that the internal course of the spleen acupuncture meridian ends in the base of the tongue. So, people with spleen problems often have tongue swelling. I’ve seen several such cases.

Now the question was: What was stressing Jill’s spleen? Well, one common source of stress on the spleen is histamine, which your body makes when you have allergies. Normally, vitamin C prevents too much histamine from being released into your system. But, when you’re under stress, you use up the vitamin C.

So, the pattern of Jill’s problem was:

**Stress → Low Vitamin C →
High Histamine → Spleen Stress →
Tongue Swelling**

Because her allergies would drive up her histamine level, her tongue swelling got worse when her allergies flared up. And, because the spleen meridian travels down the back and into the leg, Jill would get back pain when her spleen was stressed.

Understanding Jill’s problem required combining Eastern knowledge (the course of the spleen acupuncture meridian) with Western knowledge (the relationships between stress, vitamin C levels, histamine levels, and spleen stress).

Jill’s treatment included vitamins C, B6 and folic acid, to reduce her histamine level, and acupressure (simple tapping on the skin, without needles) stimulation of points along her spleen meridian, to reset the function of the meridian. Her fatigue, back pain, and allergies improved dramatically.


CHRONIC PAIN: EAST & WEST CASE #2

Edna came to my office for treatment of a deep, boring pain in her left shoulder that was with her constantly. She had pain in her shoulder, her neck, the left side of

her head, and several of her left upper molars. She’d had two shoulder surgeries to try to correct the problem, but neither had been helpful. She’d also had some of the painful teeth extracted. This had likewise not been helpful.

After a long discussion, it became clear that her pain had started a few months after she’d gotten a root canal. The procedure had been long and difficult.

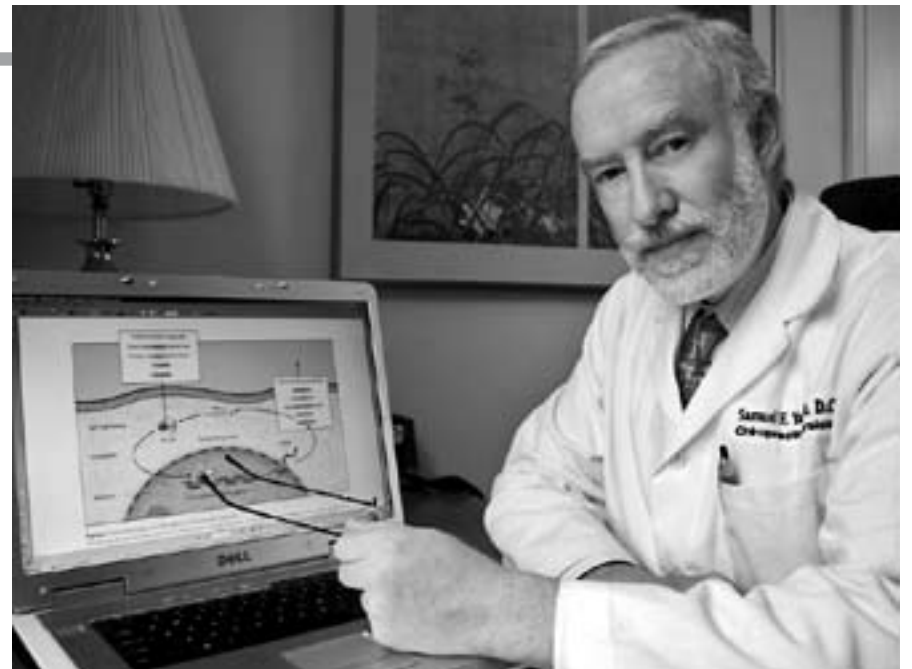
The key to Edna’s case was to understand how to combine certain aspects of acupuncture point stimulation (simple tapping on the skin, without needles) with neurological factors related to the patient’s pain. This involved having Edna focus on specific aspects of her pain pattern (where the pain was, how it felt, and her memory of times when the pain was particularly intense) while specific acupoints were stimulated. When the Eastern (acupressure) and Western (neurology) methods were combined, Edna achieved a remarkable result.

For both Jill and Edna, achieving a remarkable outcome involved combining the Eastern and Western understanding of the body. Both of these patients required unique interventions, matched to their unique needs. In both cases, the key to a remarkable outcome was combining ancient Eastern knowledge with modern Western science. 

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East & West: *Practical Applications*



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