



ON PINS AND NEEDLES

Local acupuncturist shares message of personal health

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If sticking pins in skin doesn't sound like something that would be done to alleviate pain, licensed acupuncturist Holly Arbuckle has information to share.

Arbuckle, who has a master's degree in acupuncture and has been practicing for about 10 years, will be moderating a discussion following the Student Public Health Association's screening of the film "Escape Fire" at 6 p.m. tonight in Violette Hall 1010.

The movie is about saving the health of the nation and improving American healthcare, said junior Briana Bonner, SPHA professional development chair. Bonner said she wants to show the public a fun, educational opportunity to learn about things happening beyond Truman State's campus.

Bonner said she had exchanged emails with Arbuckle, who expressed passion about the issues documented by "Escape Fire."

Arbuckle said one of the reasons she encouraged Bonner to show the film was its mention of battlefield acupuncture, a form of acupuncture Arbuckle has implemented in her practice. She said she traveled to the Washington, D.C. area to train with acupuncturist John Howard and Dr. Joan Orman, the doctor who imple-



Holly Arbuckle

mented the acupuncture program at Bethesda Naval Hospital.

With Orman's guidance, Arbuckle learned battlefield acupuncture protocol, which was created by Dr. Richard Niemtow, a retired Air Force colonel, as a method for rapid pain reduction for soldiers.

The method of battlefield acupuncture differs slightly from other techniques Arbuckle used in the past, Arbuckle said. Battlefield acupuncture involves inserting gold needles in the ear and leaving them in for a few hours or as long as two weeks.

"The theory is [the points] are connecting to parts of the brain and helping to interrupt the pain pattern," Arbuckle said. "By putting these two points in, they're able to reduce pain within minutes."

Arbuckle said the pins are placed in the ear, in an area that corresponds to the cingulate gyrus in the brain. The cingulate gyrus is involved in emotion formation, processing and memory. Another point is placed in the ear that corresponds with the thalamus, which



Top, an acupuncture patient relaxes April 10 during one of Arbuckle's treatments. Above, licensed acupuncturist Holly Arbuckle locates a point of tension in a patient's neck. The needles are placed at these points to encourage blood flow and loosen muscles.

is involved in relaying information to the body. At first, Arbuckle said she was skeptical of battlefield acupuncture because of how quick and effective it was said to be, but after trying it with a few patients, she said she has had great results that she is excited to share with her patients. She hasn't had the opportunity to work with any veterans or active service persons, but said she is offering a discount for veterans that served in Iraq or Afghanistan.

"Part of what appealed to me is that acupuncture can sometimes be viewed as strange or voodoo or a miracle cure, but it's not any of

that," Arbuckle said. "When you get something like the military using acupuncture, to a certain extent I think that really adds credibility to the field."

This method of acupuncture currently is being used at Bethesda Naval Hospital, Andrews Air Force Base and overseas in combat zones, Arbuckle said. She said this students will see this method in "Escape Fire" when a soldier goes through battlefield acupuncture therapy with Dr. Niemtow at Bethesda Naval Hospital.

While battlefield acupuncture is featured only briefly in "Escape

Fire," Arbuckle said she thinks the message the movie sends is similar to the message she tries to send to her acupuncture patients — that ultimately, each person is responsible for his or her own health.

"I think that no matter how good your doctor is or how good your acupuncturist is ... at the end of the day, you are the person making the biggest choices about your health," Arbuckle said. "I feel like the movie brings home that when you take care of [yourself], your body is going to heal a lot of things on its own."

ABOUT ACUPUNCTURE

You might try acupuncture for symptomatic relief of a variety of diseases and conditions.

- Chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting
- Fibromyalgia
- Headaches
- Labor pain
- Low back pain
- Menstrual cramps
- Migraines
- Osteoarthritis
- Dental pain
- Tennis elbow

DURING ACUPUNCTURE

Acupuncture points are located throughout all areas of the body. Your acupuncture practitioner will tell you the general location of the planned treatment and if articles of clothing need to be removed. After you lie down on a padded table, the treatment begins.

NEEDLE INSERTION

Acupuncture needles are very thin, so insertion usually causes very little discomfort. Between five and 20 needles are used in a typical treatment. Your practitioner might gently move or twirl the needles after they have been placed. Another option is to apply heat or mild electrical pulses to the needles. In most cases, the needles are left in place for 10 to 20 minutes while you lie still and relax.

AFTER ACUPUNCTURE

Some people feel relaxed while others feel energized after an acupuncture treatment. But not everyone responds to acupuncture. If your symptoms do not begin to improve within a few weeks, acupuncture might not be the right treatment for you.