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**Qi Mail™****The Acupuncture Newsletter****September 2012****Dr. Glenn H. Osterweil, D.P.M., LAc.**

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Boost Your Brain Power with Acupuncture

Having difficulties focusing, remembering tasks or organizing your thoughts? Acupuncture and Oriental medicine can help optimize your brain power through a treatment approach that incorporates different modalities, including nutritional support.

According to acupuncture and Oriental medicine the mind (Shen) embodies consciousness, emotions and thought. Shen influences long term memory, the ability to think clearly, contributes to wisdom and presides over activities that involve mental and creative functions. When the mind is healthy we are able to think clearly. When the mind is unhealthy or unbalanced we experience confusion, poor memory, and clouded thinking.

Disharmony of the mind often manifests as anxiety, insomnia, muddled thinking, forgetfulness and chronic restlessness. Meditation and acupuncture, as well as physical exercises such as Tai Chi or Qi Gong and the right foods, can balance and strengthen the mind.

Good nutrition can help boost your brain power. Not only is it essential to overall physical health, it can also enhance the function and harmony of the mind. The right foods enhance brain function by providing essential nutrients such as flavonoids, Omega 3s, vitamins, folate and iron that are great for improving the quality and quantity of learning capacity, cognitive abilities, memory and overall brain function. You can enhance your brain's health and function by including blueberries, fish, leafy green vegetables, seeds, nuts, and whole grains in your diet.

Acupuncture Improves Memory and Learning Capacity

Acupuncture can significantly improve learning and memory capacity that has been impaired by hyperglycemia and cerebral ischemia, according to a 2003 study published in the October 2008 issue of *Neuroscience Letters*. Researchers reported on whether electro-acupuncture (acupuncture needles stimulated with a mild electrical current) could improve learning and memory in rats whose memory and cognitive functions were impaired by the decreased circulatory effects of diabetes resulting in cerebral ischemia.

In the study, the effects of the acupuncture treatments were measured with a passive avoidance test, an active avoidance test, the Morris water maze and electrophysiology. With all tests, significant improvements were seen in restored memory and learning capacity. Researchers believe that the positive results of this study indicate similar benefits for humans and warrant further investigation.

Call today to see how acupuncture and Oriental medicine can optimize your mental skills!

Tackle ADD and ADHD with Acupuncture

People with ADD or ADHD generally have trouble concentrating and paying attention. Symptoms include

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Enhance Your Learning Ability

Acupuncture can be used to enhance your focus and learning ability.

A point often used for such treatments is Yintang, which is located between the eyebrows and sometimes referred to as "the third eye."

The Chinese translation for the acupuncture point, Yintang, is "hall of impression." A "hall" is defined as a corridor or passageway, or the large entrance room of a house.

An "impression" is defined as a strong effect produced on the intellect, emotions or conscience. Thus, Yintang is the entrance or passageway to the mind.

difficulty following directions and boredom or frustration with tasks. Those with ADD or ADHD also tend to move constantly and can be impulsive, not stopping to think before they act.

Behaviors typically associated with ADD and ADHD can interfere with the ability to function at school, at work and at home. If you struggle with attention deficit disorder (ADD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), you can include acupuncture as one of the treatment methods that are beneficial in managing ADD and ADHD. Research indicates that when treating ADD or ADHD, a multidisciplinary approach is most effective; including behavioral therapy, exercise, dietary changes and medication.

These behaviors are generally common in children, but they occur more frequently and are more severe in those with ADD or ADHD. ADD or ADHD is not exclusive to children. It continues as people age and, in some cases, obvious symptoms do not manifest until later. As time passes, people struggling with ADD or ADHD may have difficulty with time management, organizational skills, goal setting, employment and may have problems with relationships, self-esteem, and addiction.

Treatment for ADD and ADHD

Treatment for ADD or ADHD is best managed when families and academic and health professionals work together to meet the unique needs of the person with ADD or ADHD. Coordinated efforts can help them learn to focus their attention, develop their personal strengths, minimize disruptive behavior, and become more productive and successful.

Acupuncture is an excellent addition to any ADD or ADHD treatment plan, as it is used to help the body restore balance, treating the root of the disorder, while also diminishing the symptoms of ADD or ADHD. Acupuncture can help improve focus and attention, reduce fidgeting, lower hyperactivity, augment mood management techniques and enhance concentration.

If you would like to learn more about how acupuncture can be incorporated into your wellness plan for ADD or ADHD call for a consultation today!

Increase Your Focus with Meditation

The word "meditation" comes from a Greek word that means "to be mindful." The practice of meditation can help you tame your mind and overcome anxieties, agitation, and habitual thought patterns. The regular practice of meditation creates a continuing sense of well-being, leaving us feeling confident and calm.

How to Meditate

Create a quiet, relaxing environment, with comforting items (candles, incense, art that has a spiritual importance to you, etc.) around you.

Sit upright on a cushion with your legs folded, or in a chair with your feet firmly planted on the ground, allowing for easy breathing. Relax your shoulders and gently place your hands on your knees or in your lap.

Tuck your chin in slightly and keep your eyes half open, your gaze softly focusing downward about four to six feet in front, and your mouth slightly open.

Observe your breath. Try belly-breathing, not breathing with the chest, but from the navel. Don't accentuate or alter the way you are breathing, just let your attention rest on the flow of your breath.

The goal is to allow the "chattering" in your mind to gradually fade away. If you are distracted by a thought, gently bring your mind back to your breathing.

Continue to focus on your breathing for 10 or 15 minutes. Stay relaxed, yet awake and attentive. Finding a balance there is not easy!

Eventually, as your body understands what you are doing, meditation will become easier. Remember to be gentle and patient with yourself. Meditating for even 5 or 10 minutes can have a powerful effect on your day.

passageway to the mind.

Yintang is used to improve mental clarity, concentration and cognitive function as well as soothe emotions and relieve stress, anxiety and agitation.

Self-administered acupressure at the Yintang point can provide immediate relief of symptoms.

For effective self-administered acupressure:

- ◆ Breathe Deeply
- ◆ Focus on the point as pressure is applied
- ◆ Pressure should be strong but not uncomfortable
- ◆ Begin when you first feel symptoms and continue until they subside

Meditation and Tai Chi can also help calm and focus the mind.

Challenge Your Brain

Keep your mind active and challenged. Brain function decreases with age. Studies show that cognitive exercise can improve blood flow to the brain. Spend at least 15 minutes each day on a mental exercise such as a crossword puzzle, journaling or learning a new language in order to slow memory loss.

However you choose to exercise your brain, acupuncture can help. Numerous studies suggest that acupuncture can help improve memory, mental clarity, concentration and cognitive function.

One recently published study showed how acupuncture can be used to help patients with vascular dementia. Cerebral functional imaging before and after acupuncture treatments showed a significant increase in the cerebral glucose metabolism of the brain which is associated with improved cognitive function. Other studies have looked at how acupuncture affects the performance of students taking an exam or those with Alzheimer's disease and memory impairment

induced by diabetes and cerebral ischemia. All results, thus far, have been positive.

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