

Complementary Medicine & Acupuncture



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Aim

- To understand how patient demand for CAM might impact on conventional medicine at a clinical level
- To introduce the underlying concept of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) through acupuncture
- To explain the neurophysiological base of acupuncture

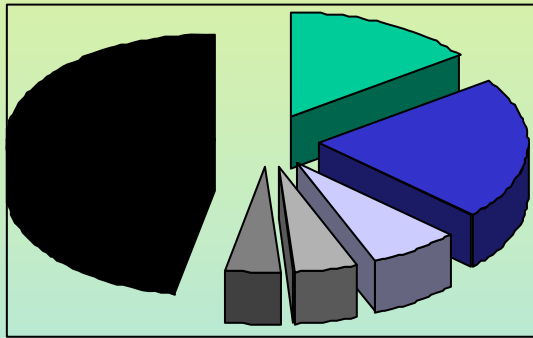
CAM usage

- \$30 billion spent worldwide p.a.
- USA usage has doubled in last 10 years.
- £1.6 billion spent in UK p.a.
- 70% of cancer patients use CAM (Southampton)
- 1:5 of UK population p.a.
- 46% are lifetime users in U.K.
- 10% of physiotherapist's practice acupuncture.
- 84% of pain clinics use acupuncture
- 95% of G.P's are asked about CAM
- 38% of G.P's practice CAM
- 32% members of Royal College Physicians practice CAM
- House of Lords select committee

How much do we really know?

BMJ Clinical Evidence

http://clinicalevidence.com/ceweb/about/systematic_reviews.jsp



- **Beneficial 15**
- **Likely to be beneficial 22**
- **Trade off benefits and harm 7**
- **Unlikely to be beneficial 5**
- **Ineffective or harmful 4**
- **Unknown effectiveness 47**

- Commonly used interventions supported by good evidence from 2500 treatments.
- “The figures suggest that the research community has a large task ahead and that most decisions about treatments still rest on the individual judgments of clinicians and patients.”

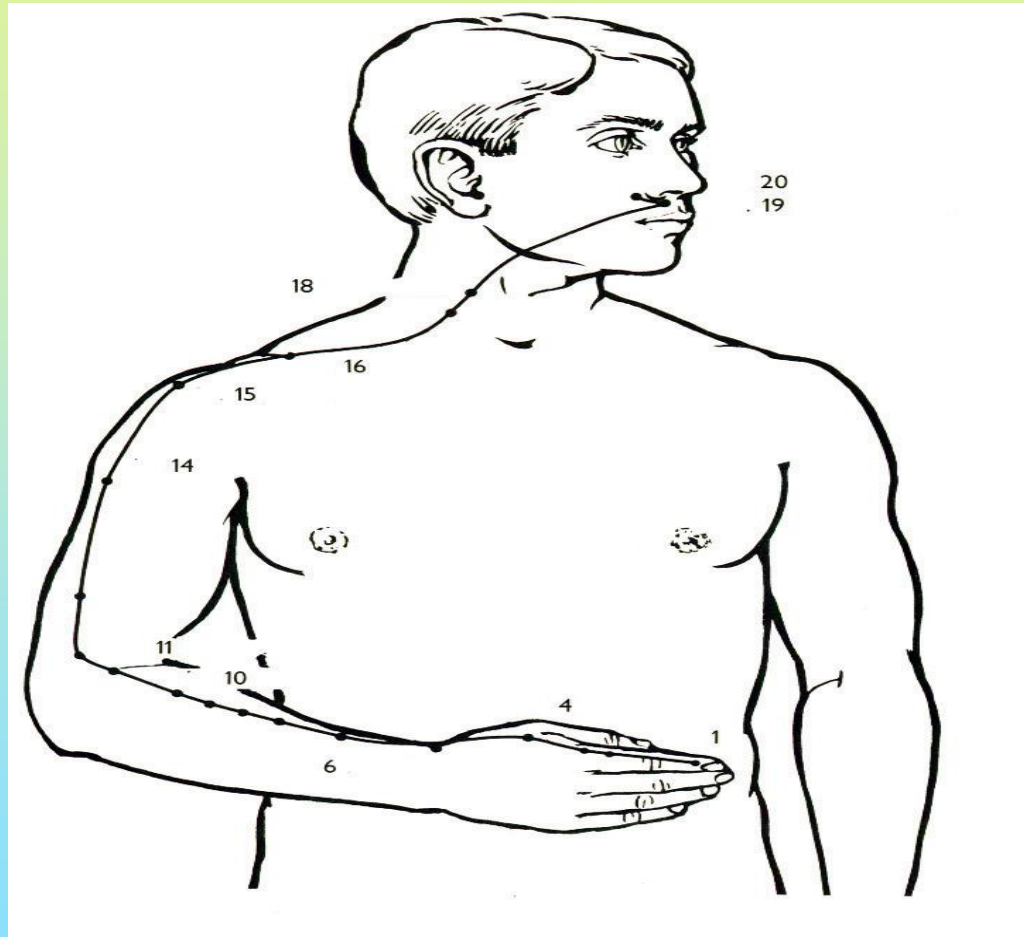
Acupuncture

- Use of CAM
- History and evolution
- Traditional theory
- TCM diagnosis
- Scientific basis
- Typical treatment for pain
- Effectiveness

Origins of Acupuncture

- In use for 5000 years
- ? Bloodletting
- ? Massage
- ? Post battle observations

What is Acupuncture?



The 'Large Intestine' meridian

TCM Diagnosis

- Look – posture, tongue, gait, eyes, complexion
- Listen – manner, tone of voice
- Ask – bodily functions
- Palpate – temperature, pain, muscle tension, skin condition, abdomen, back, pulse

Western Theories

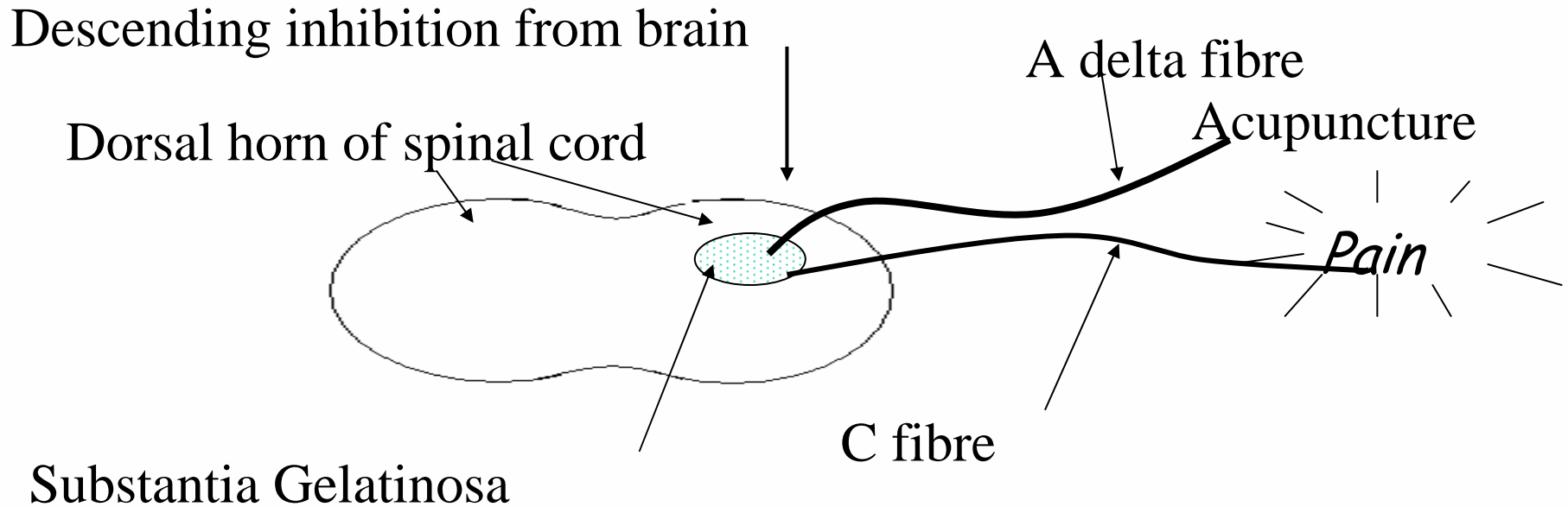
Meridians

- Decreased skin thickness
- Radioactive technecium
- Electro-magnetic fields

Acupoints

- Nerve bundles penetrate the fascia
- Musculo-tendonous junctions
- Motor points

Pain gate and DNIC



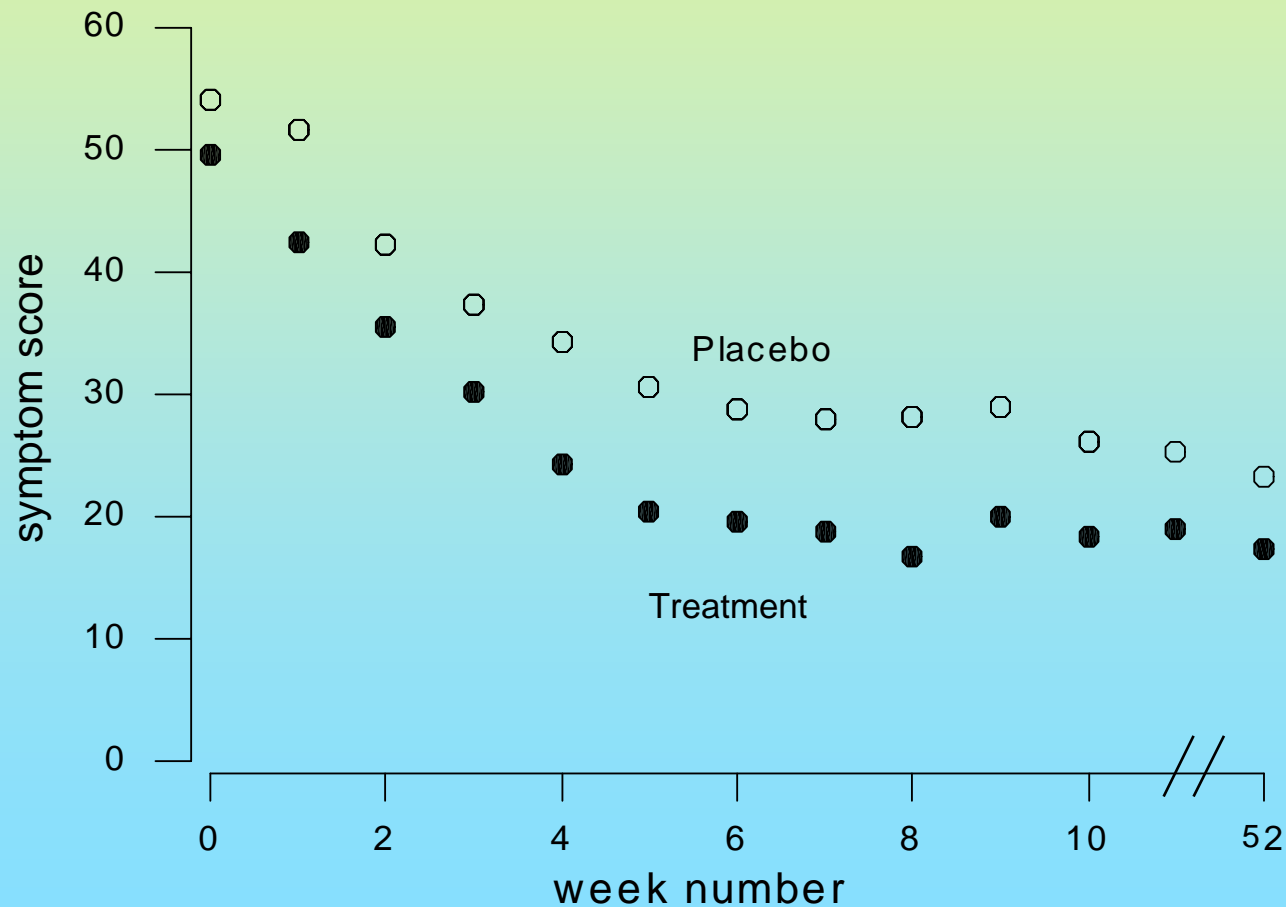
How acupuncture works

- Endorphin release
- Attenuation of self excitatory circuits
- Autonomic nervous system
- Trigger points

Point selection

- Specific cited points
- Trigger points (ahshi)
- Local points on meridian

The treatment of chronic illness; specific and non-specific effects



Can we do double-blind trials within surgery?

(Beecher, JAMA 1955; Mosely, NEJM, 2002)

- Does it change our treatment protocols if surgery is no better than placebo?

Acupuncture for neck pain works

(Witt et al, Pain 2006)

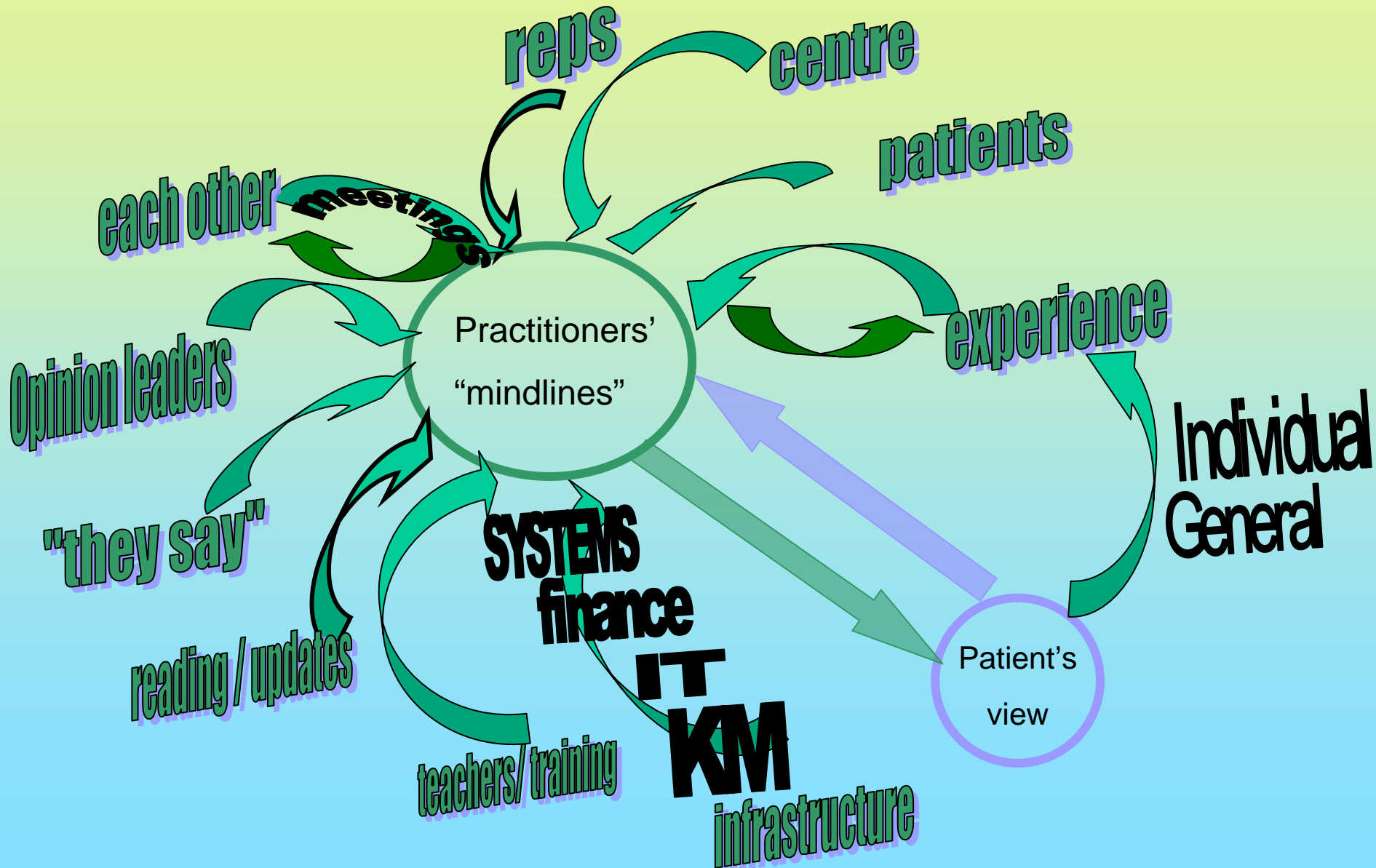
- Twice as effective as conventional treatment and also cost-effective (n=14000)
- But is it better than placebo?
- And is sham acupuncture a placebo?

Does it work?

- 70% of patients receive significant benefit
- 30% of patients benefit from placebo
- Random needling is less effective than proper treatment
- More effective than piroxicam
- Systematic reviews (back pain, nausea)
- Was as effective as NSAIDS and steroid injection for rotator cuff injuries
- As effective as physio for neck pain
- In long term more effective than steroid injection for tennis elbow

Practitioners making decisions based on evidence?

Gabbay and Le May BMJ 329, 2004.



Summary

- Increasing popularity – patients will ask you.
- We are learning more about how it works – more acceptable.
- Safe.
- It is effective.
- Has a place alongside conventional medicine to *complement*, not replace it.

Vickers A, Zollman C.
ABC of Complementary Medicine.
Acupuncture.
BMJ. 1999; 319: 973-976.