

To avoid osteoporosis, get enough calcium and vitamin D, and maintain an active lifestyle.



By Greta Burroughs For The Sun News

There are 365 points in the body that have various functions. Suzanne Swearingen places the needles according to the problem she is treating.

## Needles stick it to pain, stress and weight loss

By GRETA BURROUGHS  
For The Sun News

**P**ain management has been a problem for modern medicine for decades. In recent years, however, more physicians are beginning to integrate therapies such as acupuncture into their practices.

"The nice thing about acupuncture is that it doesn't interfere with any drugs or other therapies, and there are no side effects," said Suzanne Swearingen, a board-certified acupuncturist with the Alternative Health Clinic in Myrtle Beach and Conway. "You can use it concurrently with any other treatment and get better faster."

She said most of her patients have tried everything else and are seeking relief from pain. She works with patients' primary care physician, coordinating her treatment with other treatments the patient is receiving. Sessions last for around 30 minutes and improvement is usually seen within three sessions, she said.

"I tailor the treatments to each individual patient," she said. "I can have two patients come in for the same problem, but the treatment for each one will be different. It depends on the root cause of the condition."

The most common conditions Swearingen sees are body pain or nerve pain, but she also treats patients for infertility and stress.

"Acupuncture is best known for pain



Suzanne Swearingen

### For more information

- > Suzanne Swearingen, Alternative Health Clinic, 692-9243 or 347-5445
- > Teresa Liu at Aina Chiropractic Center, 238-6070

management, but we can help with other things, too, such as stress. I'd say about 95 percent of the population suffers from stress in one way or another and we can help with that."

In acupuncture, small sterile needles are placed in specific points in the body.

"There are 365 documented points on the body," Swearingen said. "Each point has a function and indication and we develop a point prescription based on the condition to be treated and the function of each point."

In addition to the needles, cups are used to help break up and clear congestion. The inside of the cup is heated to remove oxygen and produce a vacuum before being placed on the body.

"Acupuncture opens passages and restores the balance the body needs," she said. "The body needs help sometimes, and we provide the tools to do it."

She said primary health providers are positive about and accepting of

See **ACUPUNCTURE** | Page 5

## ACUPUNCTURE

From Page 4

acupuncture.

"They know we will do no harm," she said. "The general attitude is 'go ahead and try it' if a patient wants to try acupuncture, and some doctors have even started recommending it."

Teresa Liu, an acupuncturist at Alms Chiropractic Center in Myrtle Beach, said people come to her for a variety of problems "such as pain, sinus, arthritis, rotator cuff, back, stomach, bladder infections, weight loss, nerve problems, pregnancy, and vomiting associated with cancer treatments."

She said her clients often come to her as a last hope before surgery or when no other medical treatment has been successful.

"I try my best to help them," she said. "If after five or six treatments there is no improvement, then I do not force them to come back. Most of my clients are very happy with their treatments. We have a 50 to 70 percent success rate with weight loss and even higher success rate with pain management and other problems we treat."

While doing her schooling in China, Liu had training in herbal medicines, which she combines with acupuncture.

Liu said many doctors in this area are not open to complementary therapies.

"Clients come to me on their own, and when they tell their doctor about it the usual response is 'That's OK if you want to try it,' but there are other doctors who are very protective and don't want competition," she said.

Several doctors interviewed said they saw no harm in acupuncture, as long as it was administered by a trained practitioner.

"My basic feeling is that acupuncture is something that has been used for thousands of years in China and it continues to be popular, so it has to have something to it," said Dr. Paul G. Goetowski, an oncologist at Carolina Regional Cancer Center.

Goetowski spent a couple of weeks in China working and observing at a cancer institute



By Greta Burroughs For The Sun News

**The needles are very fine and flexible and are easily inserted in the body.**

where western and Oriental medicine were combined.

"They used chemotherapy, radiation and other methods that are used here in the states, along with complementary treatments such as acupuncture," he said. "I felt it had positive benefits, especially with pain and nausea. It worked and was very helpful. There was no harm done and the patients benefited from it."

Goetowski said he had some acupuncture treatments for back pain and that it helped a little bit, but he still had to take pain relievers.

When asked if he would recommend acupuncture for his patients he said, "If a person wants to try acupuncture, I feel

there is no harm in it as long as it is practiced by someone who is properly trained.

"If one of my patients wants to try a complementary therapy, I want to discuss it with him or her first. If I feel it is reasonably safe, then OK."

"The biggest problem is herbal medicines," he said. "Some people are afraid to tell their doctor they are taking herbal remedies because they think the doctor will not approve. Always let your doctor know and give him or her an opportunity to discuss it with you."

► Contact freelance writer **GRETA BURROUGHS** at [gretal@cccoast.net](mailto:gretal@cccoast.net)