

Getting to the point of pain

Lucy Jupp is a professional acupuncturist. **Sarah Denmark** booked an appointment with her to find out just how the practice can aid both recovery from illness and general wellbeing.

I sit down in front of Lucy Jupp, in her Wheatley consulting room, not as a patient but as something of a mild sceptic. Lucy is an acupuncturist; I'm for antibiotics and ECG machines and conventional medicines. It is clear, from the outset, that she has heard it all before. "There is a perception that acupuncture is some sort of vague, mystical alternative to Western medical practices," she gently explains. "In fact, acupuncture is a serious science. It's not some hippy-dip backwater; it's mainstream medicine that produces real, measurable results."

Lucy first became interested in acupuncture after witnessing first-hand the astonishing effects that electro-acupuncture had on a horse suffering from chronic back pain. "Just one treatment seemed to make an incredible difference," she recalls. Such was the lasting impression that

the experience had on Lucy that, three years later, she was at university studying the practice full time. She completed her course with a first class honours degree.

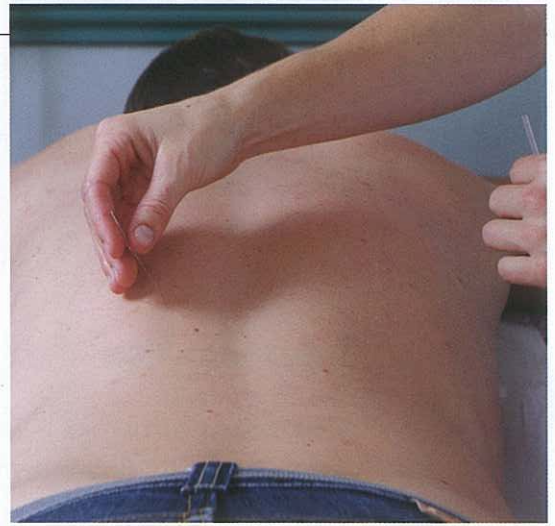
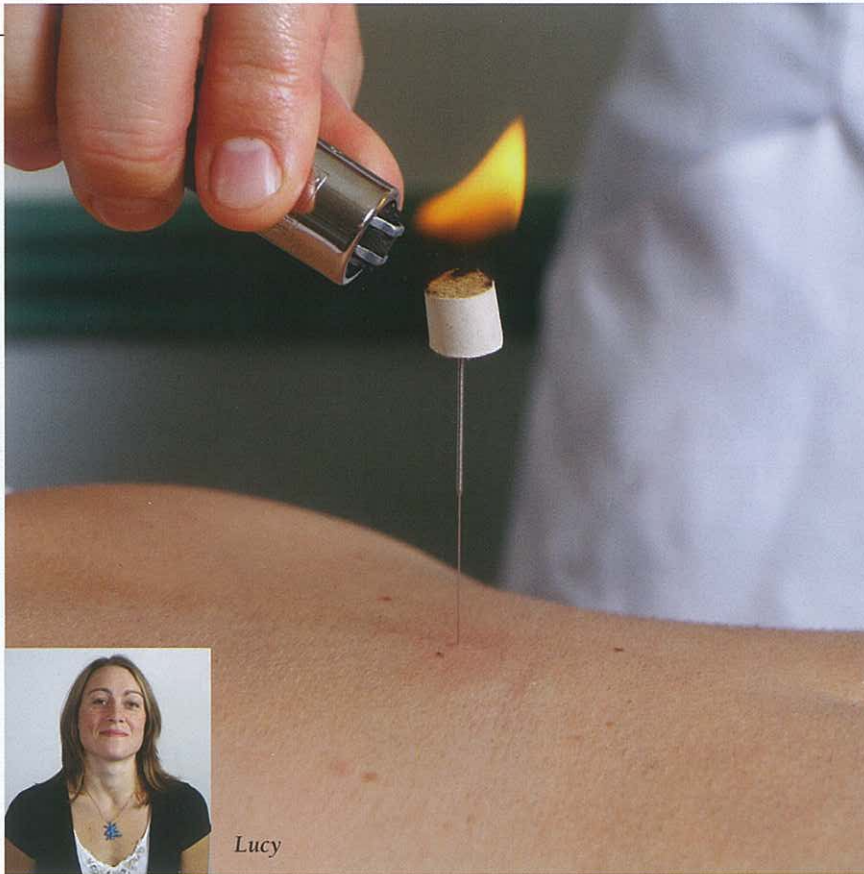
Following her graduation, Lucy decided that, if she were truly to make the most of her talents and training, she must head to the home of acupuncture: China. "What I find admirable about Chinese medicine is that it doesn't divide the physiological and the psychological," she continues. "It treats the body and the mind as a single entity. It looks at the relationship between all the organs, the body's systems and functions in order to find the cause of a medical problem and its relationship to a set of symptoms. Despite all that we know and understand about the body in the West, our society is very much reliant on cocktails of pharmaceutical drugs to fight disease and illness and to keep us feeling well."

"The real power and beauty of Chinese medicine lies in its holistic, restorative approach. It isn't some here today, gone tomorrow fad. It has been developed over two millennia and it has been subject to continuous clinical observation and testing, producing results that Western science still cannot properly explain."

So what part does acupuncture play? "Acupuncture takes its place alongside herbal medicines, and dietary and lifestyle advice," says Lucy. "In Chinese hospitals, acupuncture is as integral to healthcare as antibiotics or the latest advances in PET or CAT scanners. The Chinese see no difficulty in melding tried and tested traditional treatments with modern systems of care. In fact, the one supports and adds to the other."

"I am a member of British Acupuncture Council. All members need to have completed a minimum of three years of training. That enables us to develop a comprehensive understanding of how the human body works and how each part of the body relates to the others. It also means that we have to abide by a strict code of professional conduct so that all our clients can have real confidence in the safety and efficacy of the treatments on offer."

Lucy's spirit of investigative adventure next took her from China to Guatemala. There she set up a clinic in a small, rural village. "It was a life-changing experience," she remembers. "Most of the people lived in tin shacks and worked hard and long for every penny. At the clinic I treated fertility issues, digestive problems, respiratory complaints, and muscular and joint problems." Taking inspiration from her Guatemalan odyssey, Lucy next established a mobile practice on the Caribbean island of Roatan off the coast of Honduras, where she honed her skills and knowledge still further.



By the beginning of 2010, Lucy felt ready to return to the UK. For the past eighteen months, she has been practising out of two clinics, one in Wheatley and one in Headington. "What I love about acupuncture is its ability to treat a broad range of conditions, from the physical to the emotional, from the acute to the



Lucy at work in China

chronic," she enthuses. "One minute I can be treating someone for arthritis, the next for depression. Then I could be helping to induce a pregnant woman who is desperate for her baby to arrive. I find my job rewarding, inspiring and challenging. I really care about getting my patients back to full health and wellbeing as quickly as possible. But most of all, I am amazed at the capacity of acupuncture not simply to heal people but to change their world."

I ask about the practical effects of acupuncture. So Lucy takes me through some case histories. Jane had been suffering from fibromyalgia for 20 years and back pain, the result of prolapsed discs, for eight years. Along with the pain in her neck, shoulders and back, she had swollen hands, pins and needles in her limbs, shooting pains down her arms, and such discomfort in her feet that it felt like walking on nails. Jane was also overweight and on anti-depressants. "She came to see me for nine sessions in total," says Lucy. "In that time her back pain was significantly reduced, with only occasional, short lived mild pain. The sessions left her neck and shoulders free. Her hands stopped swelling up. The shooting pains down her arms vanished. Her energy levels recuperated, which enabled her to do regular exercise and lose a significant amount of weight. And, with advice from her doctor, she was able to dispense with the anti-depressants."

Martine came to see Lucy because she was struggling to conceive. She had come off contraceptives five years ago and had been 'properly trying' for two years. Various tests had revealed no underlying problems either with Martine or her husband. "She signed up for six acupuncture sessions," recalls Lucy. "After just three – though we didn't know it at the time – she was pregnant. She was over the moon!"

But perhaps the most impressive story is that of Pippa, a friend of Lucy's who lives in London. "Pippa had a really severe stroke two years ago," says Lucy. "As a result, her sense of balance was badly compromised. She doesn't live in Oxford, so I was only able to give her one session of acupuncture. I wasn't sure it would do very much for her because chronic cases, like Pippa's, usually require a few sessions. We used scalp acupuncture to try to help her balance amongst other things. Yet the very next day Pippa noticed that her balance was significantly improved and, better still, she found she was able to walk up steps without using a handrail. That was something she had not been able to do since the stroke."

I arrived at Lucy's a sceptic. I departed a convert.



07506 761741

lucy@lucyjuppacupuncture.com

www.lucyjuppacupuncture.com

Lucy Jupp