

The Evolution of Acupuncture in Veterinary Medicine

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The exact origin and timing of acupuncture is variable. It is said to have originated in Southern China. There is a dispute, however, that it began in Korea, and was exported to China, where it became academically systematized and then re-introduced into Korea. We have evidence that needles made of fish bone and stone were found in Korea and dated to be approximately from 3000BC. There is also evidence of acupuncture being utilized in India 5000 years ago, and additionally, a treatise about the practice of acupuncture on elephants was recently found in Sri Lanka and dated to 3000 years ago.

The consensus agrees that regardless of where acupuncture originated, it was the Chinese who academically systemized the practice of acupuncture and the philosophical construct of Traditional Chinese Medicine Theory. We do have evidence of veterinarians practicing acupuncture 2000-3000 BC. The earliest written record of veterinary acupuncture was during the Shang Dynasty approximately 1700 BC. Acupuncture reached all Asian countries by the 6th century and Europe by the 17th century. A French Jesuit published the first European work on acupuncture in 1671. It finally reached the Americas by the 19th-20th centuries, still in its infancy state in our country.

Former President Richard Nixon's open relations with China in the 1970s began the widespread sharing of knowledge, theory and research about acupuncture. In 1974, the first symposium, "Acupuncture for the Veterinarian" was organized in the USA. Two Japanese acupuncturists were invited to speak and 35 veterinarians were present. These individuals founded the International Veterinary Acupuncture Society (IVAS) which is the only organization with high quality standards and requirements for the pursuit of veterinary acupuncture through education, ongoing seminars. I only have positive comments to say about their quality and professionalism: IVAS's aim is to integrate Acupuncture into Western medicine and set international standards for training.

Presently, the American Veterinary Medical Association considers Veterinary Acupuncture a valid modality, and the procedures utilized as surgical and/or medical in nature. Currently, the AVMA is re-establishing their guidelines on Alternative and Complimentary Veterinary Medicine and are presently under review for the year 2001.

The word "acupuncture" comes from the Latin words "acus" meaning needle and "pungere" meaning to pierce. So acupuncture is the insertion of very tiny needles into specific locations at or just below the surface of the skin. One's life energy or "Qi," sometimes spelled "Chi" runs along pathways in the body termed meridians. Many acupuncture points are found along these meridian pathways. Meridians are found all over the body and ultimately connect one to another forming a complex system of "highways with on and off ramps."

Acupuncture can be very useful for pets in almost every body system. For musculoskeletal problems such as intervertebral disc disease, arthritis, hip dysplasia, spondylosis, acute trauma, sprains and strains. Regarding the urinary system acupuncture is useful for cystitis, feline urologic syndrome, incontinence, and urinary retention. Acupuncture benefits numerous nervous system disorders, particularly seizures, vestibular syndrome and epilepsy. Gastrointestinal problems such as vomiting, diarrhea, colitis and inflammatory bowel disease can benefit from acupuncture. Other syndromes that your pet can benefit from acupuncture include dermatitis, allergies, asthma, kidney disease, cancer, and pain management. A state-of-the-art microstim-400 unit uses micro-current stimulation to change the conductivity of the skin at acupuncture points to put cells into their natural state of healing.

Further information about Veterinary Acupuncture can be found on the web at www.altpetdoc.com, www.AAVA.org, and www.IVAS.org. When searching for an acupuncturist for your pet, make sure the veterinarian you choose is a Certified Veterinary Acupuncturist from the International Veterinary

Acupuncture Society (IVAS). This ensures that he/she has complied with the highest standards of education and training in this field presently known in the world.

