

Microsystems Acupuncture Today

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Various Microsystems: Historical Background

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) during the past 50 years has been supplemented and amplified by a new form of acupuncture called microsystem acupuncture.

Microsystem acupuncture is based on particular somatotopic fields comprising specific points of correspondence. Such somatotopic fields were mainly discovered in the West. Microsystems are situated on circumscribed parts of the body, for example, the auricle, the scalp, and the oral cavity. As microsystems resemble cartographies of the organism, they have an allusion to the somatotopic homunculus, as represented at the cerebral hemispheres.

Each of the microsystem points has a clearly defined correlation to, and interrelation with, a particular organ or function. Thus, microsystem acupuncture is a very effective treatment and is established for diagnosis as well.

The first microsystem to be discovered in the early 1950's was the system of specific points on the auricle. It was the French doctor *Nogier* who decoded the functional correspondences of the respective auricular points. This punctual cartography resembles a replica of an upside-down embryo. The auricular microsystem is very detailed even though the specific points are densely packed.

Ear acupuncture was continuously refined by *Nogier* himself as well as by Chinese and Russian schools of acupuncture. Nowadays, auriculotherapy is acknowledged and has gained acceptance worldwide, owing to its therapeutic and diagnostic qualities.

It may be recalled that as early as the close of the 19th century, foot reflexology—probably of Native American Indian origin—had been rediscovered in the U.S.

In the same period, *Fliess* of Berlin found out that certain digestive, urogenital as well as respiratory disorders responded well when he swabbed

specific endonasal zones with a cocaine solution. Obviously, the respective areas of lower and middle nasal conchae were inter-related with specific internal organs and functions. Nasal reflex therapy using specific zones of the nasal mucous membrane was then widely accepted and used by many European practitioners.

Together with auriculotherapy, Yamamoto's New Scalp Acupuncture (YNSA) has become a very popular form of microsystem acupuncture. In the 1970's *Toshikatsu Yamamoto* of Japan discovered various somatotopic zones on the scalp. Specific "basic" zones represent functions of the locomotor system and of the sense organs. In addition, specific "Y"-zones, of 12 points each, represent the respective main channels of TCM. Both basic and Y-zones, as found in the frontal/temporal area, are mirrored once more in the occipital region. Originally, Dr. *Yamamoto* had discovered striking inter-correlations between the traditional Japanese diagnostic zones of the abdominal wall and specific temporal points. Pain sensitivity and induration of a particular abdominal site is indicative of dysregulation of one of the TCM channels. Therapy applied to a Y-point brings about an immediate dispersal of the corresponding abdominal induration.

Oral acupuncture, also discovered in the 1970's, is another form of microsystem acupuncture. Intercorrelations of the enoral acupoints are identical with those of the five groups of teeth, as decoded by *Voll* by means of electro-acupuncture as early as 1965. One particular meridian couple is represented in each one of five dental groups as well as in the adjacent acupoints. In addition to these vestibular points, there are retromolar points, situated beyond the wisdom teeth. These retromolar points are very effective when treating dysfunctions of the locomotor system.

Hand acupuncture has proved to be another effective form of microsystem therapy. During the last decades, Korean Su-Yok ("hand-foot") acupuncture has become popular in Western countries. In Korean hand acupuncture, the twelve channels as well as reflex points of inner organs and functions and of the skeletal structure are rep-

resented by a multitude of points on the palmar and dorsal sides of the hand. A Chinese variant of hand acupuncture provides specific points which are rather related to various indications, with no apparent systematic cartography.

Finally, a somatotopic system situated at the lower leg and foot, discovered by *Siener* of Germany, has proved effective in therapy.

Characteristics Common to All Microsystems

Common features of microsystem points are: the totality of points comprised in a particular microacu-point system (MAPS) constitutes a functional image of the whole organism in a clearly defined partial area. The respective microsystem points are representative of particular organs and functions and/or of channels of TCM. In this way, microsystem points function as distant points; they always provide treatment, even if a site of pain or dysfunction is not accessible locally. Effects triggered via specific microsystem points are reproducible effects.

After several decades of practice and experience, it has become evident that microsystem therapy works differently to TCM. While the meridian points, owing to the non-stop *qi* circulation, are constantly available for therapy, in microsystem therapy an “on/off” mechanism is obvious. This results in microsystem points being strictly reactive. They are detectable only in the case of a functional disturbance of the correlated organ. Thus microsystem points show up like “warning signals.”

The activation of microsystem points results in a measurable change of electrical conductivity. This enables bio-electrical point detection. In addition, activated microsystem points are clearly tender to pressure as a rule.

Experience shows that functional disorders are naturally “signaled” simultaneously to analogous points of all microsystems. The degree of point activation, however, may vary from one microsystem to the other. Treatment can be optimized by not sticking to one microsystem only, but by

including analogous points of other microsystems as well.

As a rule, if an active point of one microsystem has been treated successfully, this results in analogous points of the other microsystems being deactivated—“deleted”—instantly. Analogous points cease to be detectable.

The “deleting” or “extinguishing” phenomenon indicates a) that a positive therapeutic impulse has been triggered, b) that the choice of points was obviously beneficial, and c) that the patient responds well to acupuncture.

The synonymous terms microsystems, microacu-point systems (MAPS), or somatotopic acupuncture are applicable to each of the following variants:

- ▶ Systems offering a basically complete organotropic representation of the organism via points or areas of correspondence (e.g. on the auricle, on the soles of the feet).
- ▶ Systems offering mini-scale representations of the channels depicting every one of the points in a very condensed space (e.g. Korean hand acupuncture).
- ▶ Systems offering a 12-point representation of the 12 main channels (e.g. YNSA, scalp acupuncture).
- ▶ Systems offering punctual representation of the respective coupled channel pairs, that is, of the five functional networks (“elements” of TCM), for example, oral acupuncture.

Incomplete micro-point systems specialized in a selection of indications (e.g. nasal reflex zones, Chinese hand acupuncture).

Interestingly, the back *shu* points, which are representative of the 12 channels, also meet these conditions. In this way, they form a link between TCM and microsystem acupuncture.

The therapeutic effects of acupuncture have been scientifically proven. This applies in particular to pain management achieved by pain research in recent decades. Modulation mechanisms involving endorphin and transmitter activation explain

the analgesic effect of both meridian and microsystem acupuncture points. Moreover, spasmolytic, antiphlogistic, sedative, and immunomodulating effects indicate involvement of the autonomic nervous system. According to *Bossy*, a neuroanatomist at the University of Nîmes, France, it is the reticular formation, where the afferences from the organ in question meet the microsystem point stimuli.

In clinical studies conducted by universities, microsystem points have proved to be superior, particularly on account of their immediate effect, especially in treating locomotor disorders.

Phenomena as seen in microsystem acupuncture may be interpreted in terms of cybernetics and system theory; this applies particularly to mutual networking as well as to the “deleting” phenomenon.

As is known today, the volumes of information, their complexity and networking are increasing in open dissipative systems. An increase in information implies an increase in order. Thus, properties which did not exist previously may emerge, as is the case with nonlinear systems. Fractal geometry, as inaugurated by *Mandelbrot*, works in the field of nonlinear equations and complex numbers. The recurrence of self-emulating figures is striking when the vast variety of forms is being scaled down progressively. The principle of fractalization (i.e. the similarity principle) has been recognized as the fundamental feature of self-organization in nature. The modern fractal-field model of organism structure opens the way to an understanding of the appearance, structure, and activity of microacupuncture systems.

In living systems, fractalization leads to organisms creating a number of quantum copies of themselves. These replicas seem to provide information exchange between the inner organs and the environment. In terms of cybernetics, therefore, microacupuncture systems are homeostats. The biological significance of these multiple copies is to guarantee greater internal stability and regulation resources.