

ACUPUNCTURE VS DRY NEEDLING – COMMENTARY

Acupuncture and dry needling, while using the same needle types, are two very different treatments. Traditional Acupuncture is used for the diagnosis and treatment of pathological conditions including visceral and systemic dysfunction, while dry needling is used for the assessment and treatment of myofascial pain syndromes and dysfunction due to myofascial trigger points / tension areas / muscle spasm / increased tonicity.

Acupuncture achieves pain relief through the release of endorphins and creating balance in the body's energy levels. Through the release of serum cortisol acupuncture can also have an anti-inflammatory effect.

Dry needling also acts via the release of endorphins and serum cortisol but also achieves pain relief and biomechanical re-function by de-activating the trigger points at the muscle cell level and thus eliminating the nociceptive focus of the muscle. The needles also cause localised haemorrhaging which promotes healing by stimulating collagen and protein formation.



For physios and other musculoskeletal therapists, DN is more popular because there is no need to train in traditional acupuncture methods in order to practice the skill/technique of Dry Needling. These therapists are already working with myofascial problems in their clinics and so have the ideal background to

integrate Dry Needling techniques, quickly and effectively, into their treatment and rehabilitation protocols.

Acupuncturists and therapists trained in traditional acupuncture are increasingly including the needling of myofascial trigger points into their treatment approaches.

Although Dry Needling is often seen as 'Trigger Point Acupuncture' as in the deactivation of Ah Shi (ouch points), Dry Needling it is very much more specific in its selection and searching for Trigger Points relevant to the clients disorder as interpreted by a western assessment and diagnostic protocols.

For more info on dry needling or to book on a course; visit www.thedryneedlinginstitute.net

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