



# Getting the Point

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The Women's Clinic @ Uxbridge Newsletter

Spring 2007

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## Acupuncturist Awarded PhD



I am delighted to announce that I have been awarded the degree of PhD in Complementary Medicine by Thames Valley University in Ealing. This is for my research into the use of acupuncture to manage hot flushes and night sweats in women taking adjuvant hormonal treatments for breast cancer.

The degree is the culmination of seven years of research, which I conducted at the Lynda Jackson Macmillan Centre (LJMC) at Mount Vernon Hospital in Northwood, Middlesex. This is the first PhD to be awarded for clinical research into traditional acupuncture in the UK.

Doing a PhD is probably one of the most challenging projects I have ever undertaken! I'm pleased to have done it – the research was fascinating – but I'm glad the hard work is finished!

I plan to do further research into the use of acupuncture for people with cancer at the LJMC – but not another PhD!

## In This Edition

Completing the PhD meant not having time to produce a newsletter. This is the first newsletter for two years, and I trust that this will once again become a seasonal publication.

- Acupuncture, Hot Flushes & Night Sweats & Breast Cancer
- New Year's Resolutions
- Healthy Diet
- More Tips for Healthy Eating
- Exercise
- New Hours for the Women's Clinic

## New Year's Wishes

This is the Year of the Pig in the Chinese calendar. The pig signifies prosperity, abundance, wealth, fertility, and reasonable success in all affairs. 2007 is the year of the golden pig, which means that the possibility of prosperity is greater than normal. Best wishes to you and yours in this auspicious year!



## Acupuncture, Hot Flashes & Night Sweats & Breast Cancer

The research I conducted investigated the use of acupuncture to manage the hot flashes and night sweats experienced by women taking tamoxifen (and other medications such as Arimidex) for early breast cancer. There are 44,000 new diagnoses of breast cancer in the UK every year, and almost 80% of women diagnosed report having hot flashes, which are thought to be a side effect of their treatment. While HRT is considered to be the most effective means of dealing with hot flashes, it is not recommended for women with breast cancer. Furthermore, many women do not wish to take medication.



As an acupuncturist working at the LJMC, I was interested to explore whether acupuncture could manage these symptoms which cause women much discomfort, distress and embarrassment.

I conducted two studies: one used traditional acupuncture (TA) using a semi-individualised treatment and acupuncture points on the body; the other used a standardised ear acupuncture protocol (NADA) with women treated in small groups of about five per group. In each study, 50 women completed a course of eight treatments, given on a weekly basis, and they were monitored for 30 weeks to assess short and long term effects.

What were the results? At the end of treatment in the TA study, women

recorded an average reduction in their hot flash frequency of 50%, while the women in the NADA ear acupuncture group recorded an average reduction of 36%. Both groups reported improvements in overall physical and emotional well-being. This included improvements in sleep, energy levels, memory and concentration, as well as reductions in anxiety, depressed mood, and general symptoms (such as headaches, general aches and pains, etc).

The results from both studies are encouraging, and worthy of further research. What is particularly exciting is that acupuncture offers these women choice in how to manage their symptoms.

Furthermore, acupuncture can help women going through the natural menopause transition to help manage their symptoms as well.

The full details of this study are recorded in my fabulous pink-bound thesis. It's a lengthy read at just under 80,000 words, and over the coming year I will be working to publish short articles that report the results.

Carol found her own way of coping with the hot flashes



## New Year's Resolutions

It may seem odd to discuss New Year's Resolutions as we approach spring. However, it may be timely. If you made New Year's Resolutions, did you succeed in keeping them?

Many people fail to keep resolutions, and there may be a number of reasons. Setting unrealistic targets or expecting life to change completely on a given day are examples. One important reason may be that the 1<sup>st</sup> of January just isn't the best time of the year to introduce changes – however minor or sweeping! This is when our energy is at its lowest, and so is our morale. It is scarcely surprising that we don't have the willpower to tackle those changes we think we should make.

So if you tried, and did not succeed – or if you didn't bother, but would like to make some improvements in your lifestyle -

## Healthy Diet

One third of cancers can be prevented simply by improving diet. What things should we do to improve diet? Here are some tips:



- Enjoy a healthier diet rich in vegetables, fruits and grains – aim to eat 5 portions of fruit/vegetables per day
- Avoid too much fat and fatty foods, especially animal fats
- Keep consumption of red meat to 80 grams or less a day
- Keep salt intake to less than 6 grams per day for adults, 3 for children (adults typically consume about 10 grams a day)
- Store food properly and discard after the use-by date
- Avoid charred or burnt foods. Only eat smoked or cured foods occasionally, if at all
- Drink alcohol in moderation.

spring may be a more appropriate time. In general, our energy is reviving, our spirits are lifting, and we may just be more programmed for success!



This newsletter will discuss some of the improvements that can be considered. These can have a major effect on our long-term health, reducing the risk of developing serious health problems, including cancer.

## More Tips for Healthy Eating

It's not just what we eat but how we eat that affects our health. Here are some tips for how to improve eating habits:



- Limit eating between meals – try to stick to 3 meals per day and one or two healthy snacks
- Focus on food – eat slowly, and focus on eating. Avoid reading or watching TV. Avoid eating when standing up or walking.
- Watch your portions – avoid heaping your plate full (except with vegetables!) Think twice before taking a second helping. Stop eating while you still feel a little bit hungry.
- Take care about what you drink – choose water in preference to soft drinks, which are rich in sugars and/or additives. Unsweetened fruit juices contain natural sugars, so limit these to 1 glass a day.

## Exercise

Moderate, regular exercise has many benefits. It can improve heart health, help to reduce weight and keep it off, and increase stamina and energy levels. It can also help to prevent cancer and cancer recurrence.

A number of long term research studies in the US suggest that regular exercise reduces the risk of cancer recurrence. Researchers in California found that women who had been treated for primary breast cancer, and who walked an average pace for just one hour per week (or did an equivalent exercise) reduced their risk of death by 20% compared with inactive women. Those who exercised three to five hours weekly reduced their risk by 50%. Doing more exercise than this did not offer any additional benefits.



This is quite remarkable, and an incentive for all of us to get walking! Current guidelines are for people to aim to walk 10,000 steps per day. This may seem like a lot, and here are some tips taken from the Cancer Research UK website<sup>1</sup> to help you incorporate walking into your daily routine. The advantages of walking are that there are no gym fees to pay, and very little special equipment to buy (apart from good walking shoes, and perhaps a pedometer to measure those steps).

- If you can, walk to or from work. If you take public transport, try getting off a stop earlier and walk from there. After all, most of us would like to spend as little time as possible in the rush hour crush!
- Take the stairs instead of the lift. If you work on a high floor, try getting off the lift a floor

<sup>1</sup><http://info.cancerresearchuk.org/healthyliving/exerciseandactivity/walking>

earlier and walk up. You can then increase the number of floors you climb, as you get fitter.

- Go for a short walk at lunch-time rather than sitting for the whole break.
- Walk to the shops instead of taking the car or bus.
- If you sit down for long periods of time try having a quick break every hour or so to walk around.
- Take a walk with friends or family - enjoy the countryside, local parks or a trip to the shops on foot.

You don't have to walk for a long time - every little bit adds up. And don't worry if you think you're unfit. Build up the amount you walk gradually.



## New Hours for the Women's Clinic

Doing a PhD meant that I had to restrict my practice hours. I am pleased that now I can extend the hours of the Women's Clinic @ Uxbridge.

**From June, the Clinic will be open on Wednesdays as well as Tuesdays. Contact the clinic for further details.**

### The Women's Clinic @ Uxbridge

Beverley de Valois PhD MIFPA MBAC

For appointments,  
information on clinic hours,  
or information about treatment  
call:

**07791 913 624**

Or visit the website at:

[www.womens-clinic.co.uk](http://www.womens-clinic.co.uk)