

# Indian Researchers Claim Acupuncture Comes from Ayurveda

Editorial Staff

While scholars have spent decades debating exactly when acupuncture came into being, it is generally accepted that acupuncture originated in China between 1,500-3,500 years ago. According to a team of doctors in Haldwani, India, however, there may be no such thing as "Chinese" acupuncture. Instead, they claim to have found new information showing that the roots of acupuncture come not from the Orient, but from ayurveda, an Indian form of healing believed to be hundreds - perhaps thousands - of years older than acupuncture.

Dr. Binod Kumar Joshi, a practicing ayurvedic doctor, and two colleagues, Drs. Ram Lal Shah and Geeta Joshi, made the announcement in New Delhi this past April. In an interview published in the online version of *The Hindu*, India's national newspaper, Joshi said the realization came to him after conducting years of study on an ancient treatise called the *Sushrit Samhita*.

According to the researchers, earlier interpretations of the *Sushrit* made mention of *marmas*, *dhamnis* and *siras*, which were believed to symbolize masses of tissue, arteries and veins, respectively. However, the doctors believe errors were made in the translation of those terms. In reviewing the treatise, they claim to have found evidence showing that the *marmas* correspond precisely with traditional acupuncture points used to treat the vital organs, and that the *dhamnis* and *siras* depict meridians and channels that aid in the flow of *qi*.

"Earlier, it was thought that the *dhamnis* and the *siras* represent arteries and veins and, therefore, whenever a damage used to occur, the first move was to preserve the concerned tissue. But then, these are actually the channels and meridians controlling the vital energy flow," said Dr. Joshi. "Our conclusion is that the *Sushrit Samhita* is the base of so-called Chinese acupuncture."

Joshi and his team plan to publish a book on their findings later this year.

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## University of Mississippi Receives Grant for Herbal Research

The University of Mississippi recently received a grant for \$1.82 million from the Centers for Disease Control to conduct research on herbal remedies. The grant, one of the largest of its kind donated by the CDC this year, will be used by the school's National Center for Natural Products Research to examine the safety, validity and effectiveness of several popular herbal products.

"Scientific studies on botanical dietary supplements, which have become widely used in large quantities by millions of Americans, are important in order to explore how these products are affecting America's health," said Dr. Alice Clark, the center's director.

A team of researchers will use the grant money to fund a variety of experiments on commonly used herbal remedies. One study currently underway will develop methods of analyzing and standardizing the content of botanicals such as St. John's wort and black cohosh.

"The quality of many of these products is questionable," observed Dr. Ikhlas Khan, an assistant professor of pharmacognosy at the center. "What's printed on the bottle is not always in the contents. Our goal is to develop tests for the FDA to use in assessing products."

Other studies will look at the possible interactions between herbal medicines and pharmaceutical products, and will review and evaluate scientific information on herbal products currently included in reference books.

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#### New Program Coordinator at Bastyr

Steve Given, MTOM, has been named the new Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Clinic Program Director at the Bastyr University Center for Natural Health. Before taking the position at Bastyr, he served as the Dean of Clinical Education at Yo San University in Santa Monica, California.

Mr. Given earned his MTOM degree from Emperor's College of Traditional Oriental Medicine. His writings have been published in various alternative health journals and newsletters, and he has demonstrated a special interest in issues such as public health, chemical dependency, and the integration of Eastern and Western medicine.

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