

Laser TCM Meeting Roundup

David Rindge, DOM, LAc, RN

The North American Association for Laser Therapy's (NAALT) [10th anniversary](#) was celebrated in San Francisco, June 11-13. Jan Tuner and Lars Hode, perhaps laser therapy's most influential voices, were keynote speakers. In addition to a full roster of scientific and clinical presentations, special sessions for acupuncturists, chiropractors and dentists were organized. Presenters and participants came from Sweden, the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany and the United States.

NAALT's tradition is to open its conference with an introductory course in laser therapy. This course varies each year, depending upon the background and interests of the presenter, yet there is always something new. This year's introduction was presented by Dr. Hode and included a strong emphasis on physics.

In a separate keynote presentation, Dr. Hode also spoke about cancer and phototherapy, noting that the non-ionizing wavelengths customarily used are incapable of causing malignancy. As to whether phototherapy accelerates cancer growth, he pointed out that nearly all studies with such an outcome had been performed on cell cultures. He emphasized that one of phototherapy's cardinal effects is to stimulate the immune system. Cells in culture lack an immune system, and this is why he believes we have seen such results with in vitro studies.

[Chukuka Enwemeka](#), PhD, NAALT's founder, first president and dean of the College of Health Science at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, declared, "The progress of laser therapy over the last 10 years has been nothing short of phenomenal. To appreciate how far we have come, you need to understand what things were like. Ten years ago there were no FDA-cleared therapeutic lasers, and only a handful of clinicians and researchers were working or studying the effects of laser therapy. Untold thousands are now practicing with lasers daily ... and the numbers and types of laser devices being cleared continues to increase."

As has also become a NAALT tradition, a panel of experts shared ideas and opinions as to absolute and relative contraindications and special considerations in laser therapy in an lively exchange with the audience. Will the results be published? Stay tuned.

Thursday evening was the President's Reception. NAALT President [Steve Liu, LAc, BSEE](#), gave an overview of the year's activities and presented a vision for the future. By Saturday afternoon, we were all on our way with new treatment strategies, perhaps a new device or two and having had the opportunity to make new friends and/or meet old ones.

For more information on the North American Association for Laser Therapy and to learn about next year's conference, visit www.naalt.org.

Modernization of TCM 2009

This past May, I was invited to take part in a symposium entitled the [Modernization of Traditional Chinese Medicine](#) in Graz, Austria. The quality of the presentations and the inspired and inspiring people made for a great experience.

"The purpose of this conference is to increase awareness and acceptance of TCM by modern medicine," said [Dr. Rudolf Bauer](#), Chairman of the Symposium, in his opening remarks. "In order for traditional Chinese medicine to move forward, we must have the science to support it."

The TCM Research Center Graz is a joint venture of two major universities and is financially supported by the Austrian province of Styria. Its purpose is to scientifically study TCM. Responsibilities for research have been divided into two principal areas, acupuncture, overseen by [Dr. Gerhard Litscher](#) and Chinese herbal medicine, overseen by Dr. Bauer.

You may recall from [my previous article](#) that Dr. Litscher has led the way to objectively measure the biological effects of traditional and laser-needle acupuncture, advancing laser needles not only as an effective treatment but also as a way to successfully blind needle acupuncture so that it may be properly studied. When I met Dr. Litscher in Graz, he made a point of explaining personally that he, like many of his colleagues, did not originally believe in acupuncture originally. Only by measuring and intimately observing its effects did he come to accept it.

For more information, visit the [TCM Research Center Graz](#).

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