

ACUPUNCTURE & ACUPRESSURE

Will You Be an Amplifer or a Mute?

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These times are changing, and changing quickly. There have been many challenges to this profession throughout the past few years. The challenge is to talk, then talk and talk some more about this medicine.

Please ask yourself, "Who did I talk to today about Acupuncture?" How did I share this medicine today? Did I pass out business cards today? If the answer is yes, how many did I give out? Ten is the magic number. Yes, you heard me, ten a day. Did I give out any other kind of material today? If yes, what is it and what information did it present to someone?

Are you a person who amplifies what they are passionate about or do you become mute when you should be sharing this medicine? Historically, information about this medicine has been kept a secret, but the secret is out and many other professions are looking to perform this medicine. What about their education? Yes, the times are changing and the secrets are out of the bag so to speak. Even the secret formulas should have the ingredients printed on the label of an herbal medicine.

Other professions, groups and individuals are moving into this medicine. Regulatory bodies are stepping up enforcement procedures. Just recently, in the state of California, the Pharmacy Board has sent an investigator into a number of herb and supply vendors who sell acupuncture needles. The vendors have been issued cease and desist letters. What is this is the question being asked? The issue is there are to be no more acupuncture needle sales in California until each vendor has a license issued by the Pharmacy Board and has posed a surety bond. How did this happen and what must be done to solve the issue?

The Pharmacy Board is looking to enforce two to three regulations from the Business and Professions Code in California. They are referring to specific language that refers to a dangerous device. How did an acupuncture needle suddenly become a dangerous device?

At first glance, for the vendor that has been visited, a negative reaction usually occurs. There has been a lot of talking in the profession these past weeks. One person said, "Let's look at it with a positive attitude. This could help to create a professional standard." The International Standards Organization, Technical Advisory Group 249 has been working on standards for medical devices being used in acupuncture offices. Needles were the first device looked at and studied.

Asking Questions

There are questions to ask each person in the profession:

- 1. How do we turn this situation in a positive for the profession?
- 2. What else could be on the watch list related to acupuncture?
- 3. What can each of us do to stay away from potential problems?

4. What do we say or give to patients that discusses the safety of acupuncture needles?

Safety is the fastest growing concern in the medical arena throughout the United States and around the world today. The World Health Organization is working on a new classification for Quality of Care and Patient Safety. Both acupuncture and herbal medicines are being included in this work.

It is important that each individual practitioner look, on a regular basis, at their own offices to see what the patients see. Once a week or at least very regularly, sit in the front section of your own office and look around. Try five sensing the office. How does it look, sound, feel, taste and smell?

Become aware of the laws and regulations in your own state, as well as Federal regulations. Many challenges are facing this profession. Become a part of the ideas and solutions, help out wherever you can.

Is nutrigenomics a new term to you? It is finding the appropriate nutrition and herbs to fit with your genetic pattern. Think about how acupuncture and herbal medicine works. We call it customizing personalized medicine. Each patient is unique, pulses are different and herbs can be mixed to meet individual needs.

There are some issues with structure-function claims. The profession cannot use words about herbs that claim it treats any certain disease or issue. This seems to be because there is not enough research-based evidence. This profession needs more data to demonstrate that we can treat disease. We are way ahead in identifying patterns and creating unique herbal medicines for patients.

Herbal medicine is a very important part of Asian medicine. It is very effective and supports your acupuncture treatments. It is so valuable that hospitals are looking to include it in their treatment resources.

Our responsibility is to educate patients through oral explanations, written material and answering questions during consultations with patients and families. This is called being an amplifier. Historically, we have been mute.

Functional medicine is becoming a very popular "buzz word." Acupuncture is the original functional medicine. Patients across the world are experiencing functional restoration through acupuncture treatments and herbal medicine prescriptions. These are very effective and have no side effects.

Be enthusiastic about your profession and be an amplifier. Make noise. Silence is not golden when it comes to acupuncture and herbal medicine. You are healthcare providers as defined in the Affordable Healthcare Act and this profession is here to stay over the long term.

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