BOOK REVIEW

Chinese Scalp Acupuncture

Review by Honora Lee Wolfe

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To read a chapter
of *Chinese Scalp
Acupuncture*,
see page 102.

Chinese Scalp Acupuncture, though written primarily as a clinic manual for practitioners of acupuncture, would be very interesting reading for neurologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, veterans hospital administrators, and any other specialists who work in any capacity with patients suffering from brain injuries, neurological diseases, chronic debilitating pain, or neuropsychological disorders such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The authors are passionate about acupuncture and wish not only to train as many practitioners as possible in its uses and techniques but also to increase both public and professional awareness of the power of scalp acupuncture in treating conditions that many medical practitioners consider to have few if any treatment options. Their enthusiasm for their work and caring for their patients is palpable throughout the book.

In the first section, Drs Hao and Hao provide readers with information about the history, development, fundamental theory, and full details of the practice of scalp acupuncture. However, the meat of the book, where it shines brightest for this reader, is in the 45 case history presentations. Together, these provide the clinical details on a wide variety of patients, and each explains how the patient was treated from

the first visit to his or her discharge from care. This material is compelling, and the treatment specifics could be applied in an acupuncture practice immediately.

The book has two potential shortcomings. First, the authors' presentation of only positive results in their case studies may be beyond some Western readers' level of credulity. Still, they do give their general amelioration rates in the first part of the book, which may balance this to some extent. Second, Western researchers and some clinicians will likely call the case studies anecdotal. The material presented has not been subjected to randomized controlled trials, and there are no systematic standards for case report data collection. This evidence does not meet the conventional standards of proof that the techniques will work in a specific percentage of cases. Still, if one has a patient who cannot walk or talk, who has tried everything

Western medicine currently has to offer, and who might gain some immediate improved functionality from a few acupuncture treatments, perhaps that is a good reason for larger studies on these techniques to be pursued. For example, the veterans who are currently suffering from PTSD and phantom limb pain might agree that these techniques are certainly worth a try in their cases, given that the technology is low-tech, inexpensive, and without side effects.

All in all, this book is an important addition to the literature on acupuncture and compelling food for thought for the groups of possible readers listed above.

ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Honora Lee Wolfe was founding director at the Boulder College of Massage Therapy in Colorado from 1976 to 1980. She studied Chinese therapeutic massage at the Shanghai College of Traditional Chinese Medicine from 1984 to 1986 and completed her acupuncture training in 1988. Ms Wolfe has taught at many national and regional acupuncture colleges and conferences in North America and Europe and is the author or coauthor of several books, including *Managing Menopause Naturally with Chinese Medicine* (1998), *Points for Profit: The Essential Guide to Practice Success for Acupuncturists* (2004), and *The Successful Chinese Herbalist* (2005). She most recently coauthored *Western Physical Exam Skills for Practitioners of Asian Medicine* (2009).