The Ninth International Symposium on Auriculotherapy: Building on the Past for the Future

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IM QUAH-SMITH, MD, PhD, was the President of the Ninth International Symposium on Auriculotherapy, held August 10–12, 2017, in Singapore. Symposiums are very difficult to create, and this event in Singapore did not offer any slack in the extremely difficult task of planning a program; inviting speakers; organizing awards, a gala dinner, refreshments, a website announcement, hotel arrangements for guest rooms, committees; and the arduous task of financing the event. Yikes! Now what did I forget? Another Herculean task undertaken by Dr. Quah-Smith was to organize with the *Medical Acupuncture* editorial staff this Special Issue. If you attended the Symposium and/or if you read this Special Issue, you will have learned about the historical background and neurophysiology of the ear, kinds of auriculo-stimulations, diagnostic techniques, and best treatments, etc. This is a plethora of information that addresses exciting aspects of ear acupuncture.

What will be the future of auriculotherapy? I suspect that functional magnetic resonance imaging will have a greater role of elucidating auriculo-mechanisms that lead to a better understanding of pain reduction and drug addiction, and enable us to gain insight into the regulation and physiologic functions contributing to this amazing microsystem. Bioelectricity plays a very important role in the body—especially in the ear. For decades, we have known that the ear has activated electrical points that correlate to illnesses. Some of these points have negative potentials and other points have positive potentials. It might be possible, with this complex electrokinetics, to predict for an individual what illnesses might occur during his or her lifetime and, therefore, use the ear as a possible diagnostic and preventive modality. The pineal gland is represented on the external ear. I hope that we will be able to learn about its clinical usefulness. It almost seems forgotten. Almost 16 years ago, the use of the *Cingulate Gyrus* on the ear was virtually unexplored and, today, it is practically a routine auriculo-point used to address pain.

Peeking into the future of acupuncture in general is like driving your car through fog. The greater the intensity of your headlights makes the road even more difficult to see. We must be careful not to shine our headlights too brightly. There comes a point when you must lower your beam and concentrate on what's just ahead of you. It's great to speculate, but we practice medicine in the present. The *Medical Acupuncture* journal does its best to focus on "what's now in the field." Insight from the readership and attending meetings helps plot a path through the information fog. We even try to bring you a modest glimpse of acupuncture's future without requiring a time machine.

—Richard C. Niemtzow, MD, PhD, MPH

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