Veterinary Acupuncture History
Evidence-Based Approach

David W. Ramey, DVM
3449 Orchid Trail
Calabasas, CA 91302
THAT'S ODD... MY NECK SUDDENLY FEELS BETTER...

EARLY ACUPUNCTURE
EVERYTHING YOU’VE HEARD IS FALSE

Used by 20% of the world’s population

Refined through history

An Important Tradition of Chinese Medicine

Practiced for thousands of years

Must use specific points along specific lines
How’s that?
ACUPUNCTURE: History

WHAT IS ACUPUNCTURE?

1. Treats points
2. Points occur along channels
3. Involves fine needles
4. Manipulates “qi” – associated theory

As such, acupuncture has NEVER been part of the historical practice of Chinese veterinary medicine.
ACUPUNCTURE: Points

The association of points with therapeutics is neither uniquely nor originally Chinese, nor is it unique to acupuncture.

Ancient Greeks and Egyptians, Medieval Arabs, 13th century Armenians and Renaissance-Europeans bled and cauterized points.

Indian traditions – 100 “marmas”
ACUPUNCTURE: Points

- A “point” is not the same thing as an “acupuncture point”

- “Points” from historical Chinese drawings are not acupuncture points
  - Bleeding
  - Cauterization
  - Divination and physiognomy
ACUPUNCTURE: Points

- In humans, acupuncture points were never in precise locations.
- The earliest human texts contain no point charts.
ACUPUNCTURE: Points

- Points in Chinese veterinary drawings have been misidentified as acupuncture points

- Fecal removal for colic at points
Even Chinese art has been misinterpreted as acupuncture!

Arrowhead acupuncture?
European illustrations of bleeding points are nearly identical to Chinese drawings, and predate them by centuries.
ACUPUNCTURE: Channels

“MERIDIANs”

- “Meridian” taken from geography, coined in France, 1939
- Channels through which “qi” flows
- Original Chinese “channel” references (mai) are to blood vessels
ACUPUNCTURE: Channels

- Early Chinese texts describe 11 mai, containing blood and "Qi"
- By late first century BC, 12 vessels described, that follow different courses than the original 11
- By 18th century, “original” conduits lost
- Western Han tomb figurine, recovered in 1993, depicted 9 channels
ACUPUNCTURE: Needles

- The common assumption is that the thin acupuncture needles used today are what was used in “needling” (zhen) in Chinese texts.
- This assumption is untrue
  - Fine needles were not used
    - Historical “needles” were larger, thicker and of cruder manufacture
    - Pounded in with hammers
  - Veterinary texts do not describe acupuncture
    - “Needles” were used for surgery, bleeding and other forms of treatment
ACUPUNCTURE: Needles

- “NEEDLING” (Zhen) isn’t the same as acupuncture
- Bleeding
- Cauterization
- Surgery

17th century Japanese text, veterinary “needles”
ACUPUNCTURE: Needles

- By the late 20th century, very little had changed!

A TRUE HISTORY

How did veterinary acupuncture get to be what it is today?
Bleeding
- Large needles, no specific points

Theoretical developments
- 11th – 14th century development of the Imperial Courts
- Practitioners did not necessarily know, nor follow, court theory

Fine needles (19th century)

Re-development and assimilation of western influences (20th century)

Acupuncture was always a minor tradition
EARLY VETERINARY WORKS

- **Qiminyaoshu**
  - Earliest known veterinary text
  - 6th century
  - No acupuncture

- Veterinary references appear in other texts, such as the 11th century *Simu anjiji*, but do not reference acupuncture and cannot be reliably dated
2005: 4th Historical Wave of Western Interest

Late 16th century - Europe

Early 17th Century - Europe

Early 19th century – Europe and America

Early 1940s – France

After each wave, acupuncture was abandoned
Late 17th and Early 18th centuries

- First reported European Contacts
  - Willem Ten Rhijne, 1683
  - Englebert Kaempfer, 1712

- LORENZ HEISTER
  - Chiurgie, 1719
  - The Needling of the Chinese and the Japanese
  - “One wonders how such clever nations can esteem these remedies so highly”
ACUPUNCTURATION - NEEDLE AND HAMMER

From Heister, *Chiurgurie*, 1719
Late 17\(^{th}\) and Early 18\(^{th}\) centuries

NOT MODERN ACUPUNCTURE

- No specific points
- No mention of “qi” – Ten Rhijne treated “winds”
- Large needles
  - “The needle must be long, sharp and round. It must have a spiral-grooved handle and be made of gold.” – Ten Rhijne
  - Needles sometimes implanted deep – into skull or “womb”
  - Left in place for 30 respirations -
- Explanations [of Ten Rhijne] “not widely different from those of our own era” - *N Amer Med Surg J*, 1826
- “Japanese and Chinese alike follow Hippocratic teaching” – Ten Rhijne
17th and 18th Century China – Veterinary Medicine

- **Yuan Heng Liaoma Ji, 1609**
  - Bleeding
  - Cauterization
  - Plants and Minerals
  - **NO ACUPUNCTURE**

- **I-hsüeh Yüan Liu Lun, 1759**
  - Drugs & prescriptions
  - Ancient traditions “lost”
  - **NO ACUPUNCTURE**
19th Century - West

- Acupuncture introduced into American medicine
- Bache, Philadelphia, 1825, reported varying successes in prisoners
- Tavernier, “*Elements of Operative Surgery,*” 1829
- Berlioz and Cloquet, France, 1820s
- Dunglison, 1843, drained fluid with “acupuncture”
19th Century - West

- By the mid-19th century, acupuncture was barely mentioned in western texts
- Gross, 1859, *A System of Surgery*
  - “Its advantages have been much overrated, and the practice...has fallen into disrepute”
Asian Attempts to Ban Acupuncture

Examination by Chinese Imperial Medical Academy Eliminated

First rejection China, 1822

1822

Prohibited in Japan 1876

1890

China rejected, 1890s

1911

1920

Last rejection, China, 1929

1950

Revived by Mao, 1950s
“ACUPUNCTURATION”
- Investigated in Europe, primarily France
- neither points nor meridians described
- failed to revive drowned kittens – US, 1826

The Veterinarian, 1828
- the “sudden and magical relief which the human being has sometimes experienced has not been seen in the horse”
- animals suffered “extreme torture” from needle insertion
VETERINARY ACUPUNCTURE
19th Century

ACUPRESSURE
– A method for stopping bleeding

Kirby, FO. Veterinary Medicine and Surgery in Disease and Injuries of the Horse. William Wood, 1888.
20<sup>th</sup> Century Developments

By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, acupuncture in both the west and east was an insignificant practice.
Three main reasons for the re-emergence of acupuncture

- Georges Soulié de Morant, 1939
- Cultural Revolution, China, 1949
- “Alternative” medicine movement of the late 20th century
Soulié de Morant

- French Consul for Shanghai
- Spent almost 20 years in China
- Intended to study medicine – fascinated by acupuncture
- Published “L’Acupuncture [sic] Chinoise,” 1939 - 1941
Soulié de Morant – The Founder of Modern Western Acupuncture

First to equate “qi” with “energy”
First to coin the term “meridian”
First to establish precise points
■ “Chinese…sources give brief and imprecise locations for acupuncture point locations…”
Created “entirely new” drawings of points and channels for people
Acknowledged “many kinds” of acupuncture (simple puncture, formulaic, theoretical)

“This work exists neither in China nor Japan, but has been meticulously extracted…”
20th CENTURY DEVELOPMENTS

EARLIEST evidence for current veterinary practice from 1950, in France, giving tribute to Soulié de Morant

- No mention of specific points
- No mention of precise channels
20th Century – Political Developments

- Acupuncture, and other traditional forms of medicine were revived in 1949, on Mao’s orders.
- Theory and practice were developed in the mid-20th century
  - Taylor, Chinese Medicine in Early Communist China, 1945 – 63, 2005
- Nixon’s visit in 1972 revived acupuncture in the west
Modern veterinary acupuncture points are not originally acupuncture or even Chinese!

- Historical point charts and modern published acupuncture charts may fail to agree on a single point of association

- Points are “transposed” from human to animal anatomy in the late 1960s or early 1970s
20th Century Vet Acupuncture Innovations: Channels

Animal Meridians invented in the 1970’s

Transposition from human charts

TRADITIONAL BLEEDING POINTS DON’T LIE ON MODERN CHANNELS
“Traditional Chinese therapy” invented by French physician, Dr. P.M.F. Nogier during the 1950s

Based on his “sudden intuition” that the antihelix of the ear is equated with the human vertebral column “in the inverse direction.”
20th Century Vet Acupuncture

Innovations: Ear Acupuncture

“ACUPUNCTURE ANALGESIA POINTS” IN THE EAR OF THE HORSE
VETERINARY ACUPUNCTURE – A MODERN INVENTION

- New! Precise points
- New! Fine needles
- New! Animal “meridians”
- New! Theory
- New! Misinterpretation of historical record to support modern practice
Thanks for Listening!