

Acupressure: No pins, no pain

By Sean Meyers
Of the Emerald

We've all heard the basic premise of acupuncture — poke a few pins in the proper junctions and away goes the pain. In theory, at least.

But what was largely overlooked in the early 1970s, when trade relations were normalized with China and information about oriental medicine inundated the Western press, was a cousin of the curious Chinese custom — acupressure.

"Actually, acupressure is older than acupuncture," says Malvin Finkelstein, who runs the Eugene Center for Acupuncture and Acupressure. "Acupuncture is about 4,000 years old, but we don't even know how old acupressure is. The reason it isn't as well known is because it isn't as dramatic as its counterpart."

A major advantage to acupressure, for hemophiliacs and the squeamish, is that it doesn't require that pins penetrate the patient's body.

Finkelstein, a native New Yorker who came to Eugene four years ago to set up his practice, became interested in acupressure seven years ago "when my own body needed healing," he says.

It worked, and he gave up a career as a typesetter and musician to pursue acupressure on a full-time basis.

Accepting the premise that acupuncture and acupressure are therapeutically beneficial, and not all medical doctors agree that they are, Finkelstein offers three basic theories on why the treatment works. He qualifies the explanations, saying "there is no one theory that satisfactorily explains it."

The "Chinese" theory's major premise is that a person has an energy system or "life force" running

throughout their bodies, like a network of rivers and lesser tributaries. These rivers flow smoothly when the body is healthy. The body becomes unhealthy whenever the system gets blocked up.

In many instances conventional medicine will treat the symptom rather than "unblock" the "energy flow," says Finkelstein. Acupuncture and acupressure are the processes of opening up those channels rather than just treating the symptom, he says.

The "Western" theory proposes that when there is extreme pain, such as the leg, the body sends a nervous impulse to the brain, which registers it as pain.

Acupuncture and acupressure work by closing a "gate" along the nervous system, thereby blocking the impulse to the brain that registers pain.

Another theory stresses stimulation of the production of endorphins, a naturally produced substance within the body that acts as a painkiller, by acupuncture or acupressure in specific areas. The patient then feels a significant reduction in pain.

Finkelstein says he is not promoting acupressure as a cure-all for whatever ailment a person might have.

"Acupressure is not used to treat disease," says Finkelstein. "If you have a disease, you should go to a medical doctor. It can be used as an adjunct to treat disease in a lot of cases, but it does not actually treat those disorders. It might be helpful in transferring energy to help treat the disease."

Finkelstein says acupressure is highly effective in treating hypertension, menstrual cramps, whiplash, headaches, stress, stomach disorders and backaches.

Dorm diners opt for brunch

A new meal plan designed to save the University housing department about \$12,000 was approved by the Residence Hall Governance Committee Monday.

The 17-meal plan for residence halls would serve brunch and dinner on Saturday and Sunday brunch starting fall term 1983. The approved plan replaces the current 20-meal plan that allows residents to eat breakfast and lunch on the weekends.

In other business, committee member Donna Kietzmann said Housing director Dan Williams has approved a proposed alcohol policy. The policy would declare stairways and hallways private areas, allowing 21-year-olds to take their alcohol with them, which is not currently allowed.

However, Williams will be seeking comments from other University administrators before presenting the plan to Pres. Paul Olum, said Fred Babcock, housing food services director.

Some people fear the new proposal would have an adverse effect on the behavior of resident minors and cause the loss of mixed-class residence halls or the abolishment of alcohol in the dorms, Babcock said.

The committee also discussed electing new RHGC members during spring term instead of fall term and having committee members receive a stipend.

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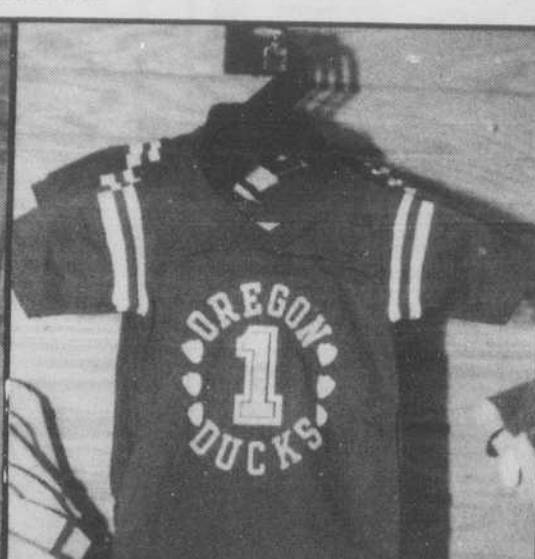
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