

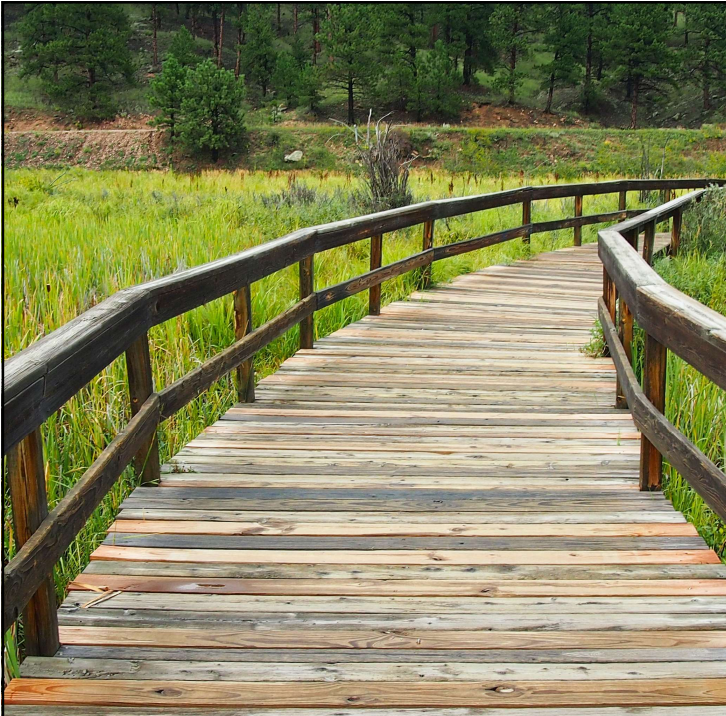


National Centre for  
Integrative Medicine  
Inspiring health and wellbeing

# Integrative Approaches to Chronic Pain

Megan Odell, L.Ac. MScOM  
MBAA

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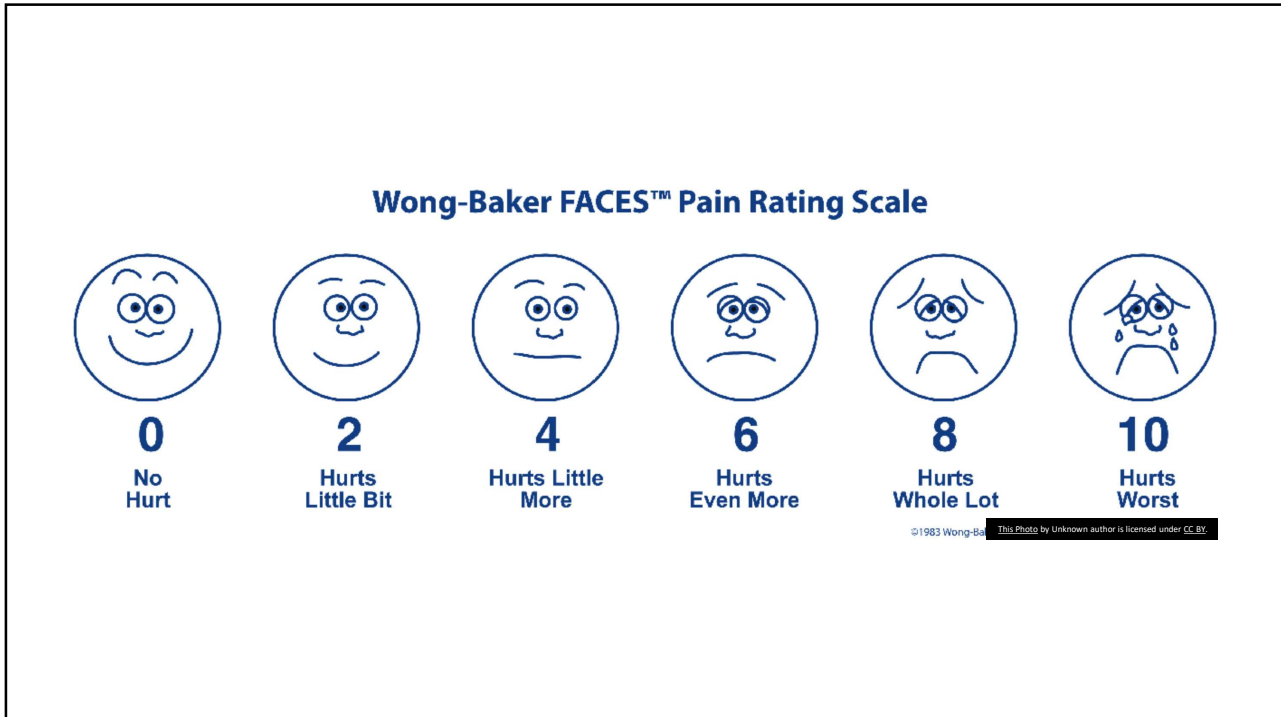


## Our Goals

You will:

- Recognize the evolving view of Chronic Pain and its treatment
- Review how an Integrative Medicine (IM) approach worked for one patient.
- Understand what TCM is and how it views pain
- Know how to choose a TCM practitioner and what to expect in a visit

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"Intensity of Chronic Pain – The Wrong Metric?" (2015)

"But no quantitative summary of these measures will adequately capture the burden or the meaning of chronic pain for a particular patient.

For this purpose, nothing is more revealing or therapeutic than a conversation between a patient and a clinician, which allows the patient to be heard and the clinician to appreciate the patient's experiences and offer empathy, encouragement, mentorship, and hope."

-Dr. Jane Ballantyne, NEJM

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## Evidence-Based Nonpharmacologic Strategies for Comprehensive Pain Care, 2017

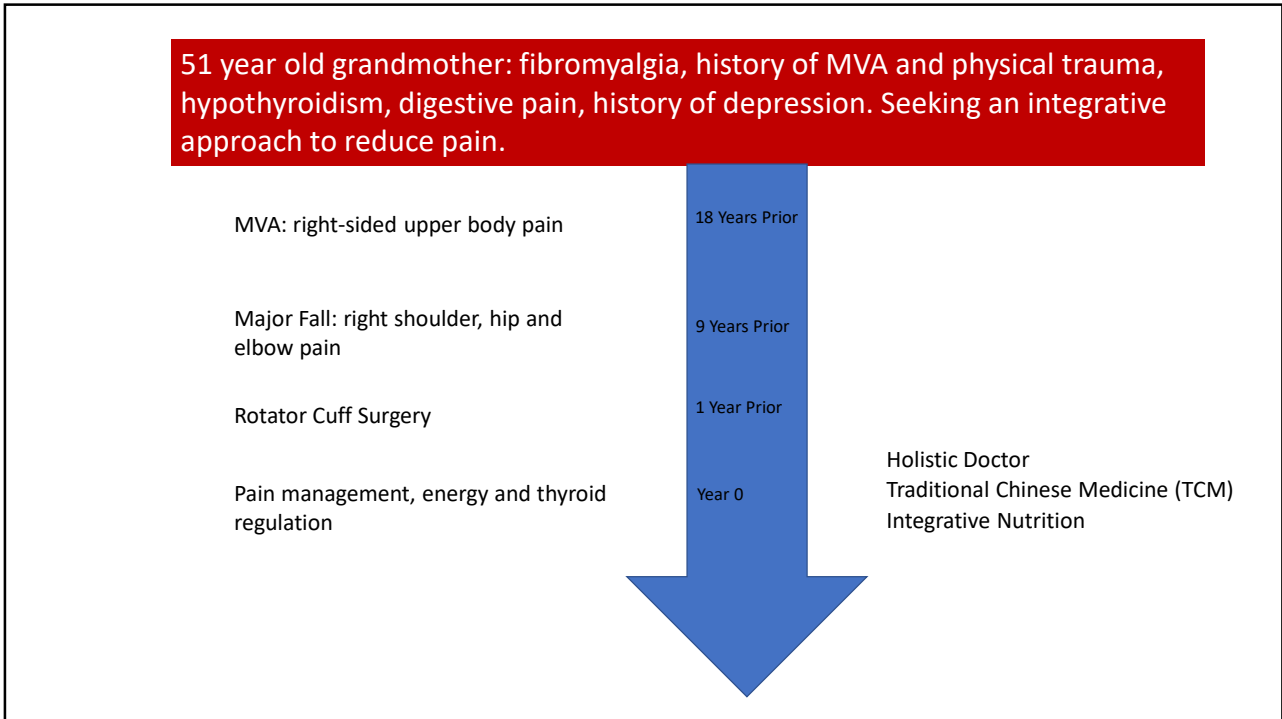
"The recommendations consistently promote a shift toward a more comprehensive, patient-centered and health-focused approach to pain patients. In this model, collaborative care is team-based, interdisciplinary, and involves both pharmacologic and nonpharmacologic approaches."

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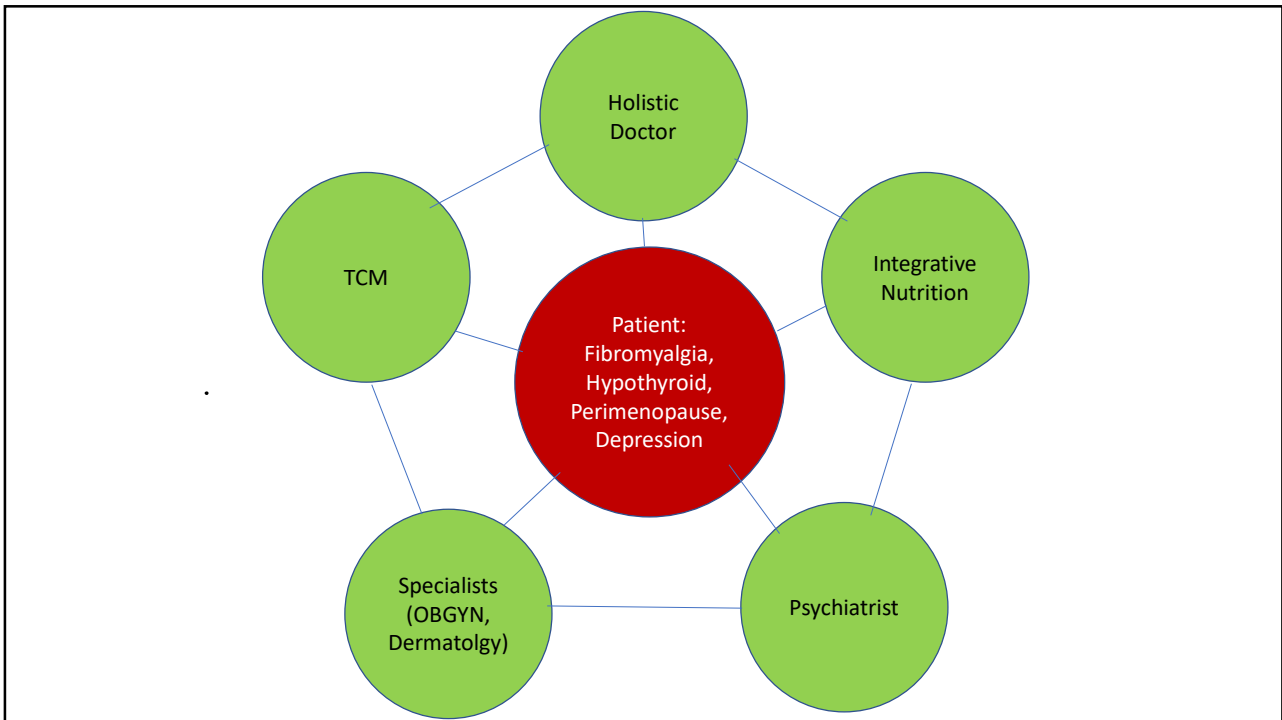
## 2021 NICE Guidelines

- "Offer a person-centred assessment to those presenting with chronic pain... to identify factors contributing to the pain and how the pain affects the person's life."
- "...Foster a collaborative and supportive relationship with the person with chronic pain."
- "Explore in the discussions:
  - their priorities, abilities and goals
  - what they are already doing that is helpful
  - their preferred approach to treatment and balance of treatments for multiple conditions."

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### Challenges

- Spanish speaker, requires interpreter to communicate complete picture
- History of childhood and domestic abuse
- History of sexual trauma
- Lives thousands of miles from her family
- Dependent on fiancé for financial support and transportation, some difficulty with his family.
- Long history of pain, identifies with pain and fatigue

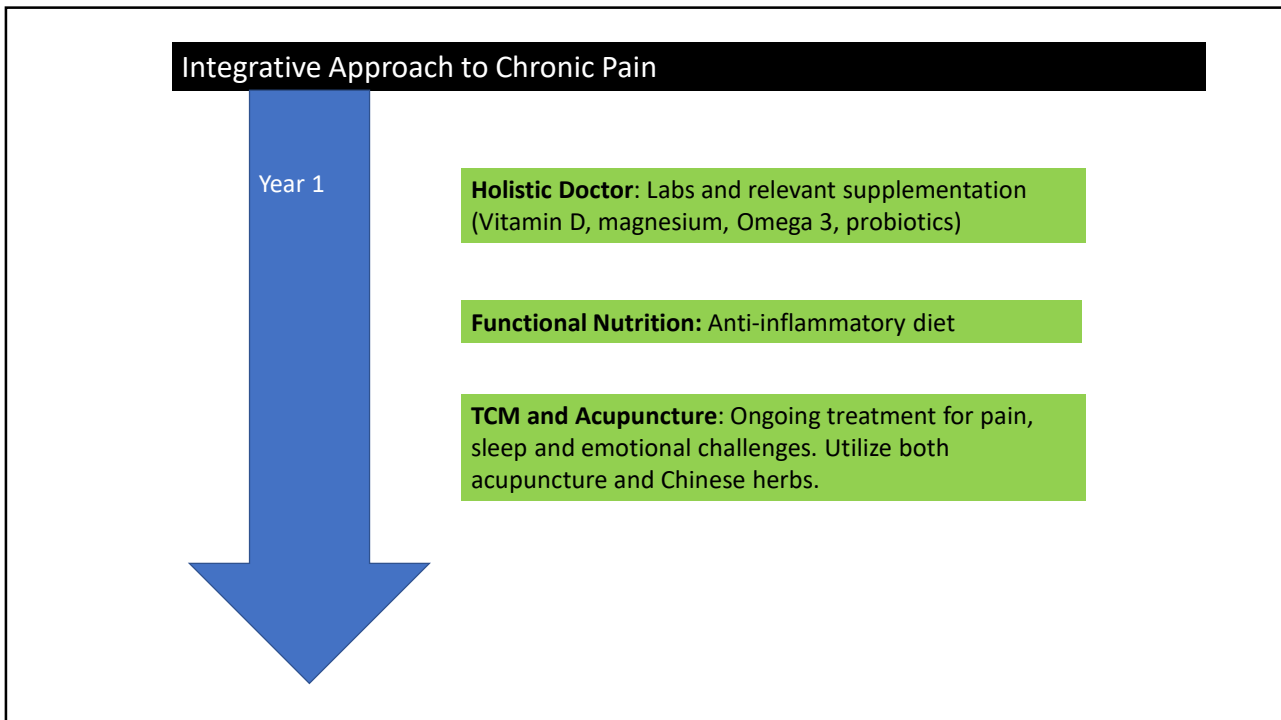
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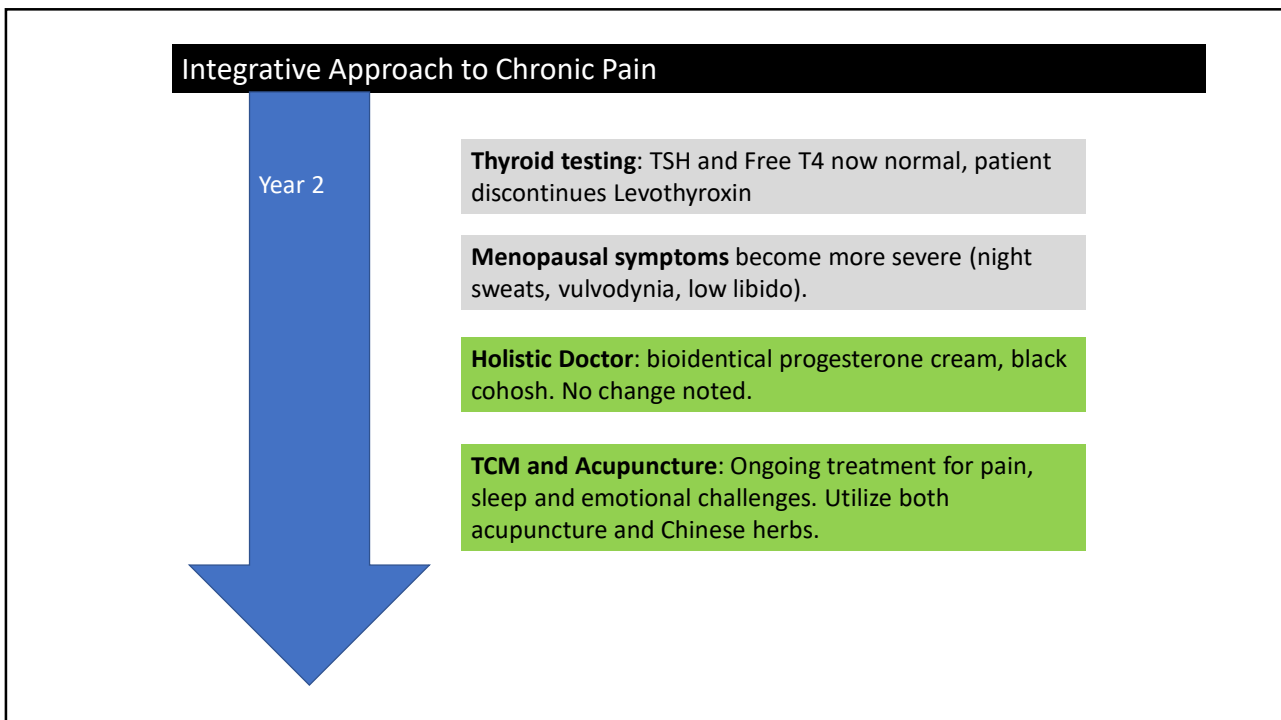
### Resources

- Self-referred to the Institute, willing to try different approaches and therapies.
- Very supportive fiancé who attends appointments with her.
- Strong sense of spiritual faith.

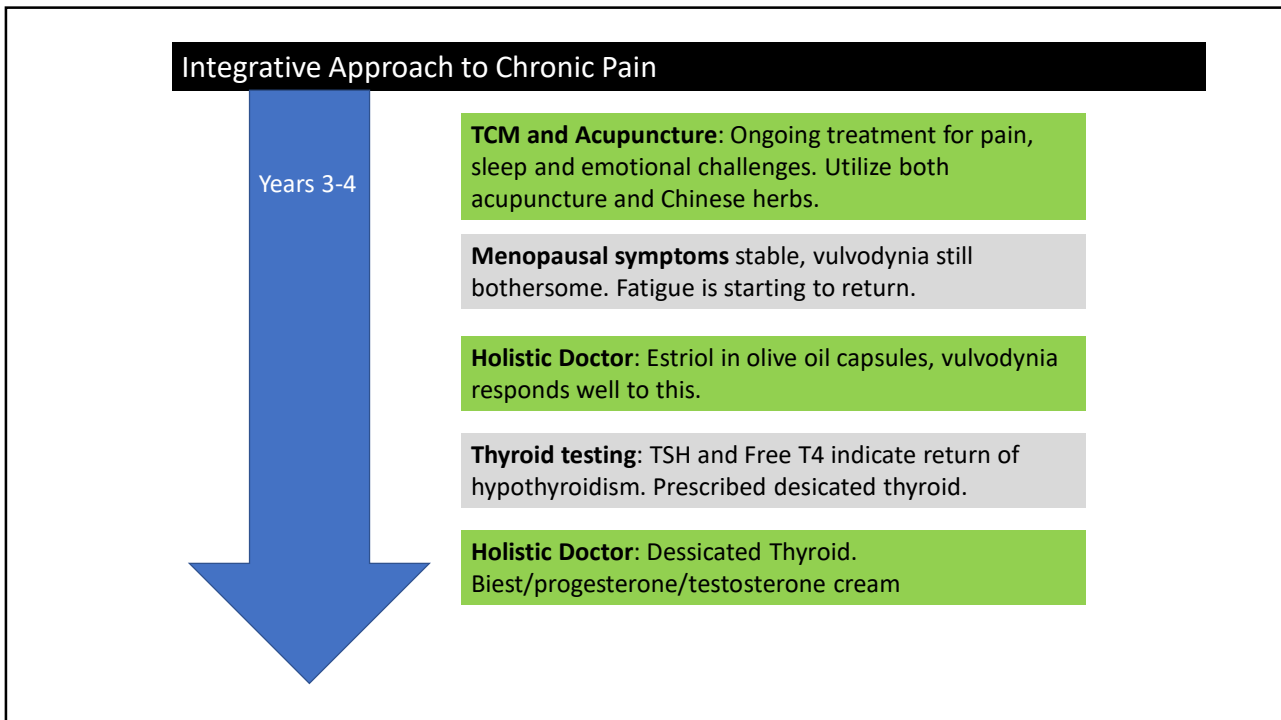
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**Current Status**

Patient reports feeling significantly improved, pain levels 85% improved. Energy significantly improved. She plans to move with her fiancé across country to be closer to her children and grandchildren. In the next several months we plan to focus on using her new energy and drive to increase physical activity and reassess nutritional needs.

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### Outcomes

- PGIHH—4 year relationship utilizing resources
- Good symptom management: 85% improvement
- Renewed sense of possibility and an ownership of her healing journey.
- Feels renewed vitality and sense of purpose
- Happy
- Ongoing integrative options: LiveWell Fitness Center to discuss approach to increasing physical activity and Integrative Nutrition for renewal of approach to nutrition.

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### Outcomes

*Patient reports integrative approach and “our friendship” “has helped me so much.”*

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## 2021 NICE Guidelines

- "Many studies (27 in total) showed that acupuncture reduced pain and improved quality of life in the short term (up to 3 months) compared with usual care or sham acupuncture."
- "The committee agreed that the type of acupuncture or dry needling should depend on the individual needs of the person with pain."

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## What is Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)?

- Complex and comprehensive medical system
- Modalities of treatment include:
  - Acupuncture
  - Herbal Therapy
  - TCM Dietary Therapy
  - Tui Na
  - Tai Chi and Qigong

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Where there  
is pain, there is  
no free flow

Where there is no  
free flow, there is  
pain.


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“Rather than blockages of circulation described in the old Chinese dogma, diseases are understood to be caused by microorganisms, metabolic failures, changes in DNA structure or signaling, or breakdown of the immune system.

...Modern studies have revealed that acupuncture stimulates one or more of the signaling systems, which can, under certain circumstances, increase the rate of healing response. This may be sufficient to cure a disease, or it might only reduce its impact.”

Subhuti Dharmananda

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## Traditional Chinese Medicine: Acupuncture

What is it?

- Acupuncture is the insertion of very thin, sterile needles into specific and anatomically significant points on your body.
- Stimulates the body's natural healing mechanisms and promotes wellbeing.

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## Cautions and Contraindications

### Possible Contraindications

- Thrombocytopenia, neutropenia-acupuncture may increase risk of infection.
- Electro-acupuncture is contraindicated for patients with pacemaker
- Herbs may not be appropriate for patients on certain types of medications.
- If patient is pregnant, it is necessary to communicate this to acupuncturist as certain points are contraindicated
- *Uncontrolled INR - recent research indicates this is not an issue*

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## Know your acupuncturist

Currently not regulated by the government, although some expect this might change soon.

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## Know your acupuncturist

Members of British Acupuncture Council and British Acupuncture Association are required to have a minimum of:

- BA or Bsc or equivalent in acupuncture training (3,600 hours)
- Compliance with healthcare legislation
- Malpractice insurance
- Continued Education

Medical Acupuncturists required to have 24-36 hours of acupuncture training. Primary training could be as doctor, dentist, chiropractor, physiotherapist, osteopath, nurse, podiatrist, midwife.

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## What to Expect

- Initial visit is typically 60-90 minutes (follow-up visits 45-60 minutes)
- Patient History: holistic view
- Presentation (look, smell, sound, etc.)
- Tongue (size, color coat, scalloping, shape)
- Pulse (rate, quality, depth, both sides, 3 positions, 2 depths = 12 readings)
- Identifying holistic patterns of disharmony
- Treatment principle

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## What to Expect

- Acupuncture
  - Insertion of needles
  - May feel sensations at acupuncture points or other areas of body
  - Needles usually left for 20 – 40 minutes
  - Usually patients leave feeling relaxed and peaceful
- TCM Health Recommendations

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## Course of Treatment

- It can take 1-4 visits to know if acupuncture is working.
- Earliest results may be temporary and will need to build up momentum for lasting results.
- Typically 1-2 visits per week at the outset; longer gaps in the first couple months will set you back.
- I typically recommend an initial 6 visits to start.

