

1

00:00:01,565 --> 00:00:08,557

This series presents information based in part on theory and conjecture.

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00:00:08,557 --> 00:00:19,543

The producer's purpose is to suggest some possible explanations, but not necessarily the only ones to the mysteries we will examine.

3

00:00:19,543 --> 00:00:35,524

In this special insertion we travel to the People's Republic of China to examine a modern mystery which had its beginnings centuries ago, the ancient medical art of acupuncture.

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00:00:36,523 --> 00:00:49,507

Chinese doctors claim a mysterious energy force they call Qi flows through the human body and controls our health and well-being.

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00:00:49,507 --> 00:00:56,499

They believe this flow can be altered by the insertion of needles at specific points on the body.

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00:00:57,498 --> 00:01:01,493

Peking Hospital in the People's Republic of China.

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00:01:01,493 --> 00:01:05,488

Lin Yanling is about to undergo brain surgery.

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00:01:05,488 --> 00:01:11,481

The only things between her and severe pain are four tiny acupuncture needles.

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00:01:11,481 --> 00:01:18,472

How these needles can have so powerful an effect is one of the mysteries of Chinese medicine.

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00:01:27,462 --> 00:01:32,456

We traveled to the People's Republic of China to attempt to solve a mystery.

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00:01:37,450 --> 00:01:42,444

Our goal was to investigate the ancient medical art of acupuncture.

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00:01:43,442 --> 00:01:51,433

We discovered that while a new China is emerging, the old continues to be prized along with the new.

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00:01:52,432 --> 00:01:58,424

We found much to admire in a culture thousands of years older than our own.

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00:02:00,422 --> 00:02:11,409

A replica of a bronze figure cast over a thousand years ago is used to explain acupuncture by Dr. Lu Xi Tsun, China's foremost expert.

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00:02:12,407 --> 00:02:21,397

He tells us that 12 lines of force, called meridians, flow through the human body, each connected to a vital organ, such as the lungs or the heart.

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00:02:22,395 --> 00:02:29,387

As long as this flow of force, the Chinese called Qi, is uninterrupted, the body will be healthy.

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00:02:29,387 --> 00:02:35,380

But if an imbalance occurs, pain, disease, and even death may result.

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00:02:35,380 --> 00:02:50,362

Over the centuries, the Chinese discovered that if small needles were inserted at specific points along the meridians, the flow of force could be balanced and the problem would subside.

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00:02:52,359 --> 00:03:03,346

It has long been a mystery to the Western world how this tiny needle inserted in the human body could often stop pain, and in some cases be a seemingly miraculous cure for many diseases.

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00:03:04,345 --> 00:03:09,339

At first, acupuncture was regarded with suspicion by the medical profession of the West.

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00:03:09,339 --> 00:03:19,327

In the early 1970s, when China opened her doors, the first visiting physicians returned with remarkable stories about the apparent effectiveness of acupuncture.

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00:03:21,325 --> 00:03:27,317

The University of California at Los Angeles was one of the first institutions to take acupuncture seriously.

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00:03:28,316 --> 00:03:33,310

An early believer, Dr. David Bressler of UCLA's Pain Center.

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00:03:34,309 --> 00:03:38,304

Acupuncture is probably the world's oldest contemporary medical system.

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00:03:39,303 --> 00:03:46,294

We consider it experimental in this country, but probably more people have been treated by acupuncture than by all other systems of medicine combined.

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00:03:46,294 --> 00:03:52,287

We give the ancient Chinese credit for discovering things like gunpowder, porcelain, paper, silk, the compass.

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00:03:53,286 --> 00:03:56,282

But their discoveries in the field of medicine were even more astounding.

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00:03:56,282 --> 00:03:58,280

They knew about vaccination against smallpox.

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00:03:59,279 --> 00:04:03,274

Thousands of years BC, and I don't have to tell you what it did to Western civilization.

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00:04:03,274 --> 00:04:06,270

They knew about circulation of blood in the body.

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00:04:06,270 --> 00:04:13,262

What's most intriguing is that their whole orientation to the human body is quite radically different than ours.

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00:04:13,262 --> 00:04:17,257

Western medicine is based principally on anatomy and physiology.

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00:04:17,257 --> 00:04:23,250

We open the body, we dissect it, we see what goes on inside, and that forms the basis of our medicine.

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00:04:23,250 --> 00:04:29,243

The Chinese worshiped their ancestors, so to do gross dissections was unthinkable.

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00:04:29,243 --> 00:04:35,236

Rather, they looked at the functional organization of the body, how all these organ systems are interrelated.

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00:04:35,236 --> 00:04:40,230

We visited a typical acupuncture clinic in Peking, China.

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00:04:40,230 --> 00:04:46,222

One of thousands throughout that vast country where acupuncture is a common practice.

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00:04:48,220 --> 00:04:54,213

Acupuncture is one of three related techniques used here for a variety of ailments.

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00:04:54,213 --> 00:05:03,202

Acupressure involves the stimulation of acupuncture points on the outside of the body without breaking the skin.

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00:05:04,201 --> 00:05:11,192

When heated maxi herbs are applied to the acupuncture areas, it is called moxibustion.

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00:05:12,191 --> 00:05:20,181

This patient is a worker whose left side has been paralyzed for over four years.

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00:05:26,174 --> 00:05:33,166

After placing several needles in the man's back, the doctor locates the precise motor point on the right side of his head

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00:05:33,166 --> 00:05:37,161

that controls the motor functions on the patient's left side.

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00:05:38,160 --> 00:05:45,151

After insertion, the needles are stimulated and left in for about 20 minutes.

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00:05:48,148 --> 00:05:55,139

After 11 treatments, he is much improved and soon will be able to return to work.

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00:05:59,135 --> 00:06:02,131

This patient suffers arthritic pains.

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00:06:03,130 --> 00:06:11,120

In addition to the usual treatment, the doctor adds a special needle fitted with a burning capsule of moxa herb.

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00:06:11,120 --> 00:06:16,114

They heat from the needle and the presence of the herb will strengthen the effect.

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00:06:18,112 --> 00:06:21,108

Obviously, this patient has found relief.

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00:06:22,107 --> 00:06:28,100

In China, I'd say one of the most exciting things they're doing is using acupuncture, anesthesia and surgery.

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00:06:29,098 --> 00:06:36,090

They have it to a point where they're using very minimal amounts of drugs and depending rather heavily on acupuncture

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00:06:36,090 --> 00:06:41,084

to provide anesthesia during really a variety of surgical procedures.

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00:06:42,083 --> 00:06:49,074

In the neurological center in the Peking hospital, a woman patient is about to undergo an extraordinary surgical procedure

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00:06:49,074 --> 00:06:53,070

under the supervision of Dr. Chao Yadwop.

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00:06:53,070 --> 00:06:56,066

She came to a hospital after examination.

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00:06:58,064 --> 00:07:00,061

The diagnosis is very clear.

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00:07:01,060 --> 00:07:11,048

That is, she suffers from a pituitary tumor and this tumor is located in the base of the brain.

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00:07:12,047 --> 00:07:16,042

Today, we use acupuncture and anesthesia to perform this operation.

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00:07:16,042 --> 00:07:23,034

There are many benefits and many advantages of acupuncture and anesthesia.

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00:07:23,034 --> 00:07:32,023

First, during operation, the patient remains fully conscious and she can cooperate with you.

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00:07:34,020 --> 00:07:40,013

The patient, blind for some years in one eye, now has almost total loss of vision in the other.

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00:07:41,012 --> 00:07:46,006

The cause, a tumor at the base of the pituitary gland.

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00:07:47,005 --> 00:07:53,996

The remedy to saw out a 4-1-1-1-1 section of her skull and remove the tumor from her brain.

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00:07:56,993 --> 00:08:01,987

The aim, total restoration of sight in both eyes.

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00:08:02,985 --> 00:08:12,973

The only anesthesia to be used throughout the operation, during which the patient will be fully conscious, will be acupuncture.

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00:08:14,971 --> 00:08:20,964

A skilled acupuncturist must know the precise points where the needles will be effective.

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00:08:21,963 --> 00:08:27,955

The slightest misjudgment could be crucial.

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00:08:36,945 --> 00:08:46,933

To strengthen their effect, electric stimulation has been added to the needles, using special low-voltage equipment.

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00:08:47,931 --> 00:08:54,923

Only four needles are used, but those in her head contact two acupuncture points each.

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00:08:57,919 --> 00:09:04,911

The usual procedure in the United States in such an operation is to administer a general anesthetic, rendering the patient unconscious.

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00:09:04,911 --> 00:09:12,901

Occasionally, a local anesthetic is given to prevent pain, allowing the patient to remain awake and able to cooperate.

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00:09:17,895 --> 00:09:25,886

Chinese doctors feel they must treat the total person, so they're careful to establish close relationships with their patients.

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00:09:26,884 --> 00:09:32,877

Confident, Lin Yanling is now ready for her operation.

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00:09:33,876 --> 00:09:40,868

In the Peking Hospital of the People's Republic of China, Lin Yanling has been prepared for brain surgery.

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00:09:41,866 --> 00:09:51,854

Her only anesthesia will be the four tiny needles placed strategically in special acupuncture points, which the Chinese surgeons know will block any feeling of pain.

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00:09:52,853 --> 00:09:59,845

Electric stimulation has been added to the needles to strengthen their effect, using special low-voltage equipment.

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00:10:00,844 --> 00:10:05,838

What you're about to see are very graphic scenes of an actual brain operation.

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00:10:06,836 --> 00:10:10,832

First, the outer layer of skin must be peeled back.

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00:10:12,829 --> 00:10:16,824

Her condition will be watched carefully by a specially trained nurse.

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00:10:16,824 --> 00:10:23,816

Conscious throughout, Yanling will be able to communicate her feelings through this nurse to the doctors.

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00:10:23,816 --> 00:10:39,797

The nurse asks if she feels any pain. Yanling answers that she does not.

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00:10:40,795 --> 00:10:56,776

Next, the surgeons must drill four small holes and saw out a four-and-a-half inch section of her skull in order to reach the tumor.

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00:10:56,776 --> 00:11:10,759

Yanling feels the vibration, but miraculously, no pain.

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00:11:11,758 --> 00:11:31,734

The nurse constantly comforts her and warns her that there will be a new sound and more vibration. Yanling says she's alright, but doesn't like the vibration.

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00:11:32,733 --> 00:11:43,720

The nurse says, try to relax. The more you relax, the easier it will be for the doctors to remove the tumor.

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00:11:44,719 --> 00:11:58,702

The surgeons can now remove the section of skull and search for the tumor.

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00:12:01,698 --> 00:12:06,692

The nurse tells Yanling the vibrations are over.

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00:12:07,691 --> 00:12:15,681

Yanling asks how much longer. The nurse replies, not too much.

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00:12:18,678 --> 00:12:25,669

The most difficult period for Yanling is now over, but the critical part for the doctors begins.

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00:12:25,669 --> 00:12:32,661

Because there is no feeling in the brain, there is no sensation of pain when the brain is touched.

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00:12:33,660 --> 00:12:42,649

However, electrical stimulation with a probe into certain critical areas of the brain will cause the patient to feel unusual sensations.

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00:12:43,648 --> 00:12:57,631

The main advantage of having the patient conscious is that she will be able to feel these sensations and convey them to the doctors so that they may map a pathway to the tumor without damaging any other part of the brain.

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00:12:58,630 --> 00:13:04,622

At last, the surgeon finds and removes the tumor.

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00:13:13,612 --> 00:13:24,598

Yanling is relieved to know that it is nearly over, and as they close the opening in her skull, she feels only an uncomfortable swelling in her head, but no actual pain.

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00:13:25,597 --> 00:13:34,586

With the operation over and the tent removed, the doctor holds up two fingers in order to test Yanling's sight.

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00:13:38,581 --> 00:13:43,575

The operation has been successful, and the results are immediately clear.

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00:13:54,562 --> 00:13:58,557

She has been an excellent cooperative patient.

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00:14:05,549 --> 00:14:14,538

While surgical use of acupuncture is dramatic and spectacular, the benefits may be even more merciful when applied to the relief of chronic pain.

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00:14:14,538 --> 00:14:17,535

For some, it can mean release from a lifetime of agony.

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00:14:17,535 --> 00:14:23,527

Doctors who practice acupuncture do not claim it to be a cure-all, nor that it works for everyone.

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00:14:23,527 --> 00:14:33,515

Understandably, the first western-trained doctors to practice acupuncture were Chinese Americans, with an understanding of the medical philosophies of both worlds.

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00:14:33,515 --> 00:14:35,513

Dr. William Koh.

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00:14:35,513 --> 00:14:39,508

Most of the things I treat is pain, arthritic pain.

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00:14:39,508 --> 00:14:41,506

I have most of the patients.

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00:14:42,505 --> 00:14:53,491

All have been worked up and treated by other doctors, like in other specialties, orthopedic neurologists, and they have worked them out before they don't get help.

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00:14:53,491 --> 00:15:03,479

With pills, they may have temporary, and that's why many of them sick and tired of using pills, and they come to acupuncture.

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00:15:03,479 --> 00:15:05,477

Patient Carl Fleck.

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00:15:05,477 --> 00:15:11,470

Over the years, most of my major joints have been getting stiffer and giving me more and more pain.

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00:15:11,470 --> 00:15:17,462

About nine months ago, it finally got to the point where I was having difficulty walking two blocks.

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00:15:17,462 --> 00:15:19,460

My left hip was giving me quite a bit of pain.

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00:15:19,460 --> 00:15:31,446

It wasn't so bad when I was calm and relaxed, but with any exercise, when things hurt, I came in to see the doctor, and in six weeks,

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00:15:31,446 --> 00:15:36,440

almost all pain was gone, and I was back walking, hiking.

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00:15:36,440 --> 00:15:42,432

Like everyone else, I was quite apprehensive about the needles being applied.

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00:15:42,432 --> 00:15:49,424

It was quite a pleasant surprise to find that it's a little more than a feeling of a pinch.

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00:15:49,424 --> 00:15:55,417

Linda Brown has had severe migraine headaches most of her life.

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00:15:55,417 --> 00:15:57,414

How are you doing?

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00:15:57,414 --> 00:15:58,413

Pretty good.

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00:15:58,413 --> 00:16:04,406

Often, she would be forced to go to bed for days at a time, unable to stand the pain.

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00:16:04,406 --> 00:16:07,402

I understand your headache since age 14.

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00:16:07,402 --> 00:16:08,401

Yes.

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00:16:08,401 --> 00:16:09,400

My condition.

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00:16:09,400 --> 00:16:14,394

The discomfort of the needles is nothing compared to her previous suffering.

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00:16:14,394 --> 00:16:18,389

Yeah, I'm glad you're all right now.

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00:16:18,389 --> 00:16:22,384

You've been doing pretty good lately after the treatment.

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00:16:22,384 --> 00:16:24,382

Your headache is pretty good.

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00:16:24,382 --> 00:16:26,379

Yeah, just the sinus.

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00:16:26,379 --> 00:16:27,378

Just the sinus.

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00:16:27,378 --> 00:16:30,375

You had a lot of pills before, didn't you?

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00:16:30,375 --> 00:16:32,372

Oh yes, every doctor gave me pills.

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00:16:32,372 --> 00:16:34,370

I was ready for something else.

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00:16:34,370 --> 00:16:36,367

Yeah, you have a second time with pills.

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00:16:36,367 --> 00:16:38,365

I don't blame you for that.

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00:16:38,365 --> 00:16:40,363

This has been the help.

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00:16:40,363 --> 00:16:45,357

I'm glad that you're response so well.

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00:16:45,357 --> 00:16:46,355

Yeah, does it hurt?

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00:16:46,355 --> 00:16:47,354

No.

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00:16:47,354 --> 00:16:51,349

No, I'm glad, yeah, yeah.

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00:16:51,349 --> 00:16:53,347

And it has worked, yes.

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00:16:53,347 --> 00:16:56,343

I've been in bed for 24 to 48 hours.

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00:16:56,343 --> 00:16:57,342

I'm out.

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00:16:57,342 --> 00:16:59,340

I got a job.

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00:16:59,340 --> 00:17:02,336

Before, I just didn't think I would ever be able to hold a job down.

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00:17:02,336 --> 00:17:07,330

When acupuncture was first introduced to this country in the early 1970s,

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00:17:07,330 --> 00:17:09,328

some doctors got very excited.

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00:17:09,328 --> 00:17:15,321

And of course, the majority of the doctors, they were very skeptical.

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00:17:15,321 --> 00:17:20,315

Dr. Henry Chan has been in the forefront of the struggle to legalize acupuncture.

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00:17:20,315 --> 00:17:24,310

I'm sure the official body of the medical doctors

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00:17:24,310 --> 00:17:28,305

used a statement that, well, acupuncture this time is still experimental.

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00:17:28,305 --> 00:17:33,299

In 1975, acupuncture has been legalized now in California.

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00:17:33,299 --> 00:17:37,294

Since then, for those who have been doing acupuncture,

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00:17:37,294 --> 00:17:40,291

if they are qualified, they can get a license from the state board

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00:17:40,291 --> 00:17:43,287

for medical quality assurance.

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00:17:43,287 --> 00:17:45,285

Now, this is a very fragile area.

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00:17:45,285 --> 00:17:49,280

And this is the area most patients are having the problem.

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00:17:49,280 --> 00:17:51,277

I would say that the majority of a patient

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00:17:51,277 --> 00:17:55,272

belongs to this type, low back pain.

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00:17:55,272 --> 00:17:57,270

In addition to the low back area,

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00:17:57,270 --> 00:18:01,265

we have also to put some needle in the lower extremity.

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00:18:01,265 --> 00:18:06,259

In this case, it will be right behind the D.

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00:18:06,259 --> 00:18:13,251

Many of Dr. Chan's patients come to acupuncture as a last resort.

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00:18:13,251 --> 00:18:16,247

The reason I put the needle here,

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00:18:16,247 --> 00:18:21,241

is that this is to enhance the therapeutic action of the needle

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00:18:21,241 --> 00:18:23,239

over the local area.

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00:18:23,239 --> 00:18:26,235

In this case, it's the low back.

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00:18:26,235 --> 00:18:30,230

In addition to the needle, add the heat to the needle.

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00:18:30,230 --> 00:18:33,227

I don't mean to burn the needle or burn the patient,

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00:18:33,227 --> 00:18:36,223

but to use the heat to warm up that area,

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00:18:36,223 --> 00:18:39,220

as long as some moxibuction.

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00:18:39,220 --> 00:18:43,215

Now, here I have a moxistic here.

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00:18:43,215 --> 00:18:46,211

It's just like a regular cigar.

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00:18:46,211 --> 00:18:52,204

I light it on one end and put it about one inch away from the point

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00:18:52,204 --> 00:18:55,200

to warm up the acupuncture point.

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00:18:55,200 --> 00:18:58,197

This kind of heat is penetrating,

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00:18:58,197 --> 00:19:02,192

and the patient can experience more relaxation

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00:19:02,192 --> 00:19:07,186

and sometimes pain relief immediately after the treatment.

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00:19:07,186 --> 00:19:10,182

I'd say that the most intriguing modern theory

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00:19:10,182 --> 00:19:13,179

of how acupuncture works involves a discovery that was made

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00:19:13,179 --> 00:19:15,176

just a few years ago.

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00:19:15,176 --> 00:19:19,171

The discovery is that the nervous system makes its own pain-relieving substances,

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00:19:19,171 --> 00:19:21,169

called endorphins, or inner morphines,

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00:19:21,169 --> 00:19:26,163

that are hundreds of times more powerful than our most powerful pain-relieving drugs.

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00:19:26,163 --> 00:19:29,159

It looks now that acupuncture,

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00:19:29,159 --> 00:19:32,156

rather than having a direct effect on pain

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00:19:32,156 --> 00:19:35,152

by blocking a nerve or stopping nerve transmission,

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00:19:35,152 --> 00:19:39,147

that acupuncture stimulates the nervous system

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00:19:39,147 --> 00:19:42,144

with more of its own pain-relieving substances,

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00:19:42,144 --> 00:19:45,140

and therefore has an indirect effect on blocking pain,

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00:19:45,140 --> 00:19:50,134

that it turns on the body's natural pain-relieving mechanisms.

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00:19:50,134 --> 00:19:55,128

It does help explain why acupuncture can be effective in controlling pain.

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00:19:55,128 --> 00:19:58,125

It doesn't help us very much in explaining why it's also effective

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00:19:58,125 --> 00:20:00,122

in the treatment of bronchial asthma,

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00:20:00,122 --> 00:20:05,116

why many diabetics who get acupuncture often

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00:20:05,116 --> 00:20:08,113

are able to reduce the amount of insulin they require,

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00:20:08,113 --> 00:20:11,109

why people with gastrointestinal complaints,

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00:20:11,109 --> 00:20:16,103

why people with a variety of other kinds of problems also respond to acupuncture.

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00:20:16,103 --> 00:20:21,097

A test is being conducted at the California Acupuncture College

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00:20:21,097 --> 00:20:25,092

to attempt to verify the existence of acupuncture points.

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00:20:25,092 --> 00:20:29,087

As this electronic device passes certain areas,

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00:20:29,087 --> 00:20:33,083

the light indicates these precise points have some special chemical,

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00:20:33,083 --> 00:20:37,078

electrical, or thermal characteristics.

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00:20:38,076 --> 00:20:41,073

Is it mere coincidence that they are exactly the same

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00:20:41,073 --> 00:20:46,067

as the acupuncture points discovered thousands of years ago by the Chinese?

203

00:20:49,063 --> 00:20:52,060

It is really the first holistic medicine,

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00:20:52,060 --> 00:20:56,055

realizing that you treat people, not diseases.

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00:20:56,055 --> 00:20:59,051

And the bottom line for me is I'm interested in things that work.

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00:20:59,051 --> 00:21:02,048

I'll figure out how they work later.

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00:21:02,048 --> 00:21:07,042

Even though acupuncture is being used more and more in the United States,

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00:21:07,042 --> 00:21:11,037

exactly how it works is still a mystery.

209

00:21:17,030 --> 00:21:22,024

Most historians agree that China has the oldest civilization in the world.

210

00:21:28,016 --> 00:21:31,013

Is it possible that her doctors have known for centuries

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00:21:31,013 --> 00:21:36,007

what we, in an age of medical specialization, are just now learning?

212

00:21:37,006 --> 00:21:40,002

Yes, but I don't know how to say it.

213

00:21:41,001 --> 00:21:44,996

Coming up next, a mountain man kills two Idaho game wardens,

214

00:21:44,996 --> 00:21:51,988

but the locals refuse to help bring him to justice on FBI The Untold Stories.

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00:21:51,988 --> 00:21:55,983

And later tonight, history's mysteries turns to sports

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00:21:55,983 --> 00:21:58,979

for a look at the violent evolution of games of combat.

217

00:21:58,979 --> 00:22:04,972

At 8 Eastern, 9 Pacific, here on the History Channel, where the past comes alive.