

**Nawei's Acupuncture Clinic
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**OPEN YOUR HEART TO TRADITIONAL CHINESE
MEDICINE**

By Dr. Nawei Jiang

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Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. Although the nation leads the world in disease research, hundreds of thousands of people still suffer from the symptoms of heart disease, often unaware of the warning signs. While Western medicine searches for answers, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) can offer another path to treatment.

The term "heart disease" includes many conditions, including arrhythmia, hypertension or high blood pressure, high cholesterol, congestive heart failure and coronary heart disease. We've all heard that we can lower our cholesterol by eating more non-fat foods, getting an adequate amount of cardiovascular exercise and quitting smoking -- all excellent, commonsense suggestions. But if changing your habits doesn't reduce your personal risk for heart disease (which may include family history of the disease, race or other medical conditions), your doctor may prescribe medication. Is that the only solution? The answer is a resounding NO.

For thousands of years, Chinese medical doctors have successfully treated the conditions and symptoms of heart disease. Recent Western studies have positively concluded that acupuncture can lower blood pressure, reduce angina (heart area pain), regulate blood flow in the heart, and improve the function of the heart in congestive heart failure.

According to Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) theory, the onset of heart disease is closely related to body aging and the excess of food, sex and seven emotions (anger, joy, worry, pensiveness, sadness, fear and shock). These factors can cause problems such as an imbalance between the Yin and Yang and internal organs. There is currently a substantial amount of research being done on the efficacy of TCM in treating heart diseases, particularly with acupuncture. This research has shown that acupuncture can reduce sympathetic nervous system activity, thereby directly affecting heart rate and blood pressure. Results have also shown that acupuncture can promote the blood metabolism in our body, thus decreasing blood viscosity and improving blood circulation, normalizing blood pressure, and decreasing blood sugar and lipid levels. It can also aid to dilate and strengthen blood capillaries to prevent stroke. This benefit can be long lasting: some patients report having normal blood pressure nine months after completing treatment.

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The basic principle of TCM is the presence of Qi and blood, the two vital substances that nourish our tissues and organs. Without the proper amount and adequate movement of Qi and blood we have disease. Acupuncture regulates the Qi in the meridians and activates blood within the vessels. In addition, studies have shown that acupuncture stimulates the nervous system to produce opioids and the hormone cortisol, which help reduce stress, stop pain and regulate blood production, thus aiding the heart.

In traditional Chinese medicine, the heart's function is to regulate the blood, ensuring the flow into and out of the heart and to the various tissues and organs in the body. A dysfunction of the heart means that there is a dysfunction of the blood. In Chinese Medicine, each heart disease patient is given a differential diagnosis. This means that each individual is unique, even if they are being treated for the same condition as someone else. This allows the Chinese medical practitioner to determine the precise combination of diagnosis and therapies for each individual patient. Therapies may consist of acupuncture, Chinese herbal medicine, or both, and will typically also consist of diet and lifestyle modifications to treat the underlying root(s) of the condition(s).

In addition to acupuncture, exercise and dietary changes may be recommended. Traditional Chinese herbal formulas may be prescribed to provide a stabilizing link between acupuncture visits. Herbs are tailored to treat the individual, depending on the symptoms and diagnosis. Certain supplements may be recommended as well, including essential vitamins and minerals.

There is a Chinese saying; "There is no pain if there is free flow. If there is pain, there is no free flow." Applying TCM treatment to a heart disease patient can help and enhance one's heart function, rebalance all systems of the body, and restore the body to total health and well-being.