

Acupuncture: The power in needles

SHARMIN MEHRIBAN

A bold red 'acupuncture' sign catches the eye of any passer-by along a certain road in Maghbazar.

"I don't know what that means," comments a passer-by. Although the Electronic Acupuncture Treatment & Training Centre (EATTC) originated in 1980, knowledge about acupuncture and its benefits is not yet widely known in the local society, said Dr. AKM Jahangir Khan, who is in charge of the clinic and specialises in the ancient Chinese technique of treating illnesses by inserting needles at certain points of the body.

"The Chinese word for 'acupuncture' is 'Chanchan' which means 'to put holes' and it is a part of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)," explained Khan who holds a B.Sc (Bachelor of Science) degree and a L.Ac. (Licentiate Acupuncturist) from China.

Being a president of Electronic Acupuncture Society of Bangladesh, a life member of International Acupuncture Society at Hong Kong and a member of China Acupuncture Association in China, he said that every Chinese hospital contains facilities for modern medicine, TCM and herbal medicine and it is up to a patient to choose any of the techniques for treatment.

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There are 361 points within these channels that are known as 'acu points'. "The needles are inserted in the acu points. Initially



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there is a sense of obstruction and pain but ultimately the pain is reduced as the blood circulation is regularised," said Khan.

He also added that the needles are disposed after use. All equipment at the clinic originates

from China, Japan and Hong Kong.

About side effects, he said that the only side effects of acupuncture are if the needles break during insertion or are infected with germs.

"Acupuncture must be practiced only by professionals who know the position of the acu points," he said.

Responding to a question about electro acupuncture, he said that in this technique jacks attached to a stimulator machine are attached to the needle tops, and the other part of the needles are inserted into the body.

In case of needle-less acupuncture, jacks are straightaway inserted in the body without the needles. No specific age limit is required for acupuncture, he said.

Khan added that the World Health Organisation (WHO) has recommended acupuncture and its credibility lies in the fact that they themselves sponsor annual conferences on this method of treatment.

A survey conducted by WHO in 1979, shows that acupuncture has been found to be an effective remedy for diseases like allergy, asthma, nervous weakness, paralysis, polio, nervous pain, headache, sinusitis, migraine, spondylosis, pain in the neck or waist, weakness, arthritis, eczema, gastric, rheumatism, insomnia, stomach ache, peptic ulcer, pimples and hair loss.

Acupuncture also helps in balancing shortages of white blood cells that is necessary for maintaining the resistance power in the body. Treatment at EATTC cost Tk 300 per day whereas a three-month training course on acupuncture, both theoretical and practical, cost Tk 4,000 per month.

INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM DAY

Shaping present through past

WAHIDA MITU

A programme jointly organised by the Bangladesh National Museum (BNM) and International Council of Museum (ICOM) in the city last Thurs-day marked International Museum Day.

The programme included rally, seminar and exchanged of views, under this year's theme: "Museum and Young People".

"As the youth are the future of a nation, they must know their past to build their present, and so plan for the future," said Professor Mahmudul Haq, director general, BNM at the seminar.

"This is why young people come forward first to partake in different humanitarian activities. Museums serve informal educational activities and facilitate the youth to effectively utilise museum resources in the educating themselves on our cultural heritage," he added.

"BNM plays an important role in order to provide young people with moral strength and courage for the future. It arranges school programmes, provides guided lectures and screen film shows on cultural and natural heritage of different countries of the world including Bangladesh regularly," he said.

Jahangir Hussain, chairperson of ICOM and keeper of Contemporary Art's And Civilisation of BNM said, earlier people had a very superficial knowledge about museums. But now people are more educated and are aware



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of museums and pay attention to them, resulting in at least 120 museums in the country, established with the initiatives of the government, private and personal interests.

Prof Dr Sharifuddin Ahmed, directorate of Archive and National library said, in western countries very young children adapt to the idea of patriotism from these organisations, whereas in our country there is no such attempt to instil patriotism in the minds of the younger generation.

He also said that educational institutions could organise programmes to introduce students to history and culture academically.

Prof Shahidul Islam, president of parliamentary standing committee, Ministry of

Cultural Affairs as a chief guest in the seminar said, a museum is a preservation centre of history and culture and history expresses a nation's past.

He also emphasised on relating students to this type of organisations. He urged the teachers to come forward in this regard.

Other speakers at the seminar were Abul Kalam Monjur Morshed, DG, Bangla Academy, Mahmud Shafique, director, Folklore Museum, Sonargaon, Mohammad and Nur Hossain Talukdar, secretary of BNM.

Students out with vengeance

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His roommates assured him that the bugs were not harmful, but merely sucked blood.

"I first thought it was mosquitoes, but they could not bite me in the back. Then I thought it must be ants," said Shamim.

A kind of bug-repellent chalk, dipped in pesticide, is in high demand among the students, but they bring little relief.

The revival of the infestation of bed bugs once considered eradicated by a cleansing drive in the wake of the dengue outbreak in the city has irked the residents and perplexed the hall authorities.

"They have comeback with a vengeance, developing immunity to pesticides," said a house tutor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall.

Residents blame the chairs

of hall auditoriums and sofas in the guest rooms for the resurgence of the sleep-robbing bugs.

"The authorities cannot recall when the chairs were last cleaned," said Rakib, a resident of Muktiyoddah Ziaur Rahman Hall.

After receiving numerous complaints, the Suryasen Hall's administration launched a cleansing drive in its auditorium last week.

A cleaner said at least a kilogram of pests was found in the holes and joints of the chairs.

"Hundreds of bugs scurried out looking for ways of escape when we poured hot water on the chairs," he said.

The women's residential halls seem to be lucky as only a few of them complained of bugs.

"There is no chance of bugs

breeding in our hall. The entire hall is cleaned three times a day," said Jhumur, a resident of Fazilatunnesa Mujib Hall.

"Unlike mosquitoes, which can transmit malaria or dengue, bed bugs have not been linked to anything more serious than the itchy, red welts that appear on the skin," said a section officer of the Dhaka University Medical Centre.

"In some cases, however, there may be a little fever," he said.

When contacted, Md Mahfuzul Islam, provost of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall, said, "If all the students keep their rooms and furniture neat and clean, the two-thirds of the work would be done."

"We will get students' help for a week long drive," he said.

Only 15 wreckers for four lakh

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Alamgir Hossain Hillol was very angry when he had no option but to push his car with a helper at Bijoy Sarani on Saturday when it broke down. He said: "I have visited several countries and metropolises and seen towing trucks in all of them. But unfortunately in Dhaka I have not seen any. And now I am pushing my own car in this sweltering heat."

Intejar Ali, a driver who drives buses on the Mirpur-Gulistan route, said: "If a moving vehicle suddenly stops on a busy road, it just adds to the chance of accidents and sufferings of the people."

The DMP officials said they have one wrecker for more than 27,000 vehicles on average plying the city streets.

According to the Strategic Transport Planning Project of the Dhaka Transport Coordination Board, more than one lakh vehicles ply the main roads during peak hours.

Dhaka metropolitan area has a road network of 3,002 kilometres, the DMP deputy commissioner said. It has become difficult for the police to keep the roads clear from vehicles breaking down on the streets, especially heavy vehicles like covered vans, trucks and buses that create traffic congestion, he added.

The police are often forced to hire heavy-duty towing trucks from the Roads and Highways Department to remove faulty heavy vehicles, he said.

Vehicles that break down at

busy points such as Shahbagh or Bangla Motor create heavy traffic congestion if the vehicles are not immediately removed.

Breaking down of the vehicles are very common in Dhaka as at least 80 per cent of the diesel-run vehicles were found to be mechanically faulty, according to survey by the Air Quality Management Programme of the Department of Environment.

No one in the police department was able to say whether there are any initiatives to procure more towing trucks in the near future.

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