Acupuncture

Jason Carr, Former Pet Health Network Editor-in-Chief

Jason has over 8 years of experience in the pet health industry and was managing editor of IDEXX's Pet Health Network team.

Animal acupuncture isn't a new concept. *According to Christian Nordqvist of medicalnewstoday.com*, it has been practiced for thousands of years. It involves thin needles being poked through the skin at specific points on the body. Nordqvist explains, "According to traditional Chinese medical theory, acupuncture points are located on Meridians through which gi vital energy runs."

Some veterinarians embrace acupunture

Although this would be the point when some veterinarians would roll their eyes, others do embrace the potential beneficial effects of acupuncture. *Marilyn Maler (DVM, Dipl, ACVSMR), of TCVM.com writes*, "The use of acupuncture in equine sports medicine is very common today…. Many practitioners, myself included, are fully integrative and use many modalities including traditional diagnostics and medicines as well as TCVM *[Traditional Chinese Veterinary Medicine]* to approach cases." Even the *American Veterinary Medical Association* voted to admit the *American Academy of Veterinary Acupuncture* as a constituent allied veterinary organization, according to *AVMA.com*.

Many of the veterinarians who practice acupuncture see it as a complement to western medicine, while others see it as a last resort. Very few doctors see it as a replacement for western medicine. It's simply another treatment option, and not a viable way to treat a broken bone or kill a virus.

The benefits of acupuncture are often anecdotally observed in cases of chronic allergies, hip dysplasia, lameness and arthritis. Some say it cured their pets when nothing else could. *Juju Chang and Cassy Arsenault, of ABC news,* reported that multiple dogs treated for back pain with acupuncture showed remarkable improvement. Mark Rindler, guardian of one dachshund mentioned in the article even went so far as to say, "Acupuncture saved her life."

Some veterinarians do not embrace acupunture

Other veterinarians say that acupuncture lacks adequate scientific data. Juju Chang of ABC.com goes on to say in her article, "David Ramy helped shape the guidelines for alternative therapies for animal treatment plans for the American Veterinary Medical Association and said the root of the issue is 'there is no consensus' on if acupuncture has any effect on the animal's health."

The data that's available for acupuncture seems to suggest that it doesn't do any harm, nor confirm that it is beneficial. So far few, if any studies have been able to demonstrate the good it does on a biological level.

Acupunture remains a contraverssial subject. In the end, how you treat your pet is a decision only you and your veterinarian can make, acupuncture is one option that's steadily gaining popularity in the U.S. If it sounds like something you'd like to try, we suggest you do your research and seek veterinary advice.

If you have any questions or concerns, you should always visit or call your veterinarian – they are your best resource to ensure the health and well-being of your pets.

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