

Book Reviews

Close to the Bone (3rd edition) – The Treatment of Musculo-Skeletal Disorder with Acupuncture & Other Traditional Chinese Medicine

By David Legge
Sydney College Press, 2012
ISBN: 9780957739222

Twenty-one years after the first edition of this book, David Legge has substantially revised and updated his text on musculoskeletal acupuncture. Gone is the spiral bound format of the previous two editions to be replaced with a 338 page hardcover textbook. This book is written to address the perceived lack of attention to musculoskeletal disorders in many acupuncture courses in the West. The fundamental tenant of this book is that the Chinese medical model, while useful to understand the underlying cause and nature of musculoskeletal conditions, lacks the tools to accurately identify the location, severity and prognosis of these conditions. This gap can be filled by good palpation and examination techniques and sound bio-anatomical knowledge.

The book is organised into three sections: *The Chinese Medical Framework*; *The Pathoanatomical Framework*; and *A Regional Survey*. Section one reviews basic Chinese medical theory targeting Chinese medicine neophytes and builds to a focus on Chinese medical pathology. Generic acupuncture and herbal treatment for various underlying pathological categories relevant to musculoskeletal disorders are outlined. Included in this section is a 38 page discussion of the *Jingjin*, a rarely discussed group of secondary channels concerned with treating painful musculo-tendinous conditions and the subject of a separate book by the author.

Section two considers the body in terms of the type of tissue involved and the nature of the pathology from a biomedical perspective. A framework for case taking, examination and diagnosis is provided followed by a systematic overview of disorders and treatment of the muscles, tendons, joints, and nerve compression. The relationship between myofascial trigger points and *Ashi* points is discussed along with needling methods to treat them. These are often the most important points in musculoskeletal acupuncture and it should be noted that these points are the focus of the 'dry-needling' movement.

Section three comprises nearly two-thirds of the book and examines disorders by body region. Each region is considered from both a Chinese medicine and anatomical perspective. Useful points are discussed along with appropriate physical examination and any special tests that are necessary for differential diagnosis. Common disorder for the head and neck; thorax; shoulder; elbow; forearm wrist and hand; low back; hip and buttock; knee; and leg, ankle and foot are differentiated and discussed. Treatment suggestions include acupuncture, moxibustion, cupping, exercises and herbal medicine. Extensive detail on identifying and selecting suitable *Ashi* points/trigger points is provided and this is a strength of this book. Recommendations on treatment frequency and prognosis set this book apart from some more academic texts and facilitate its intended use as a clinical manual.

The bibliography lists a short set of reference books and web links. An appendix listing the ingredients of the guiding herbal formulae would have been a valuable addition. An ingredient list is all the more important when formulae such as *Xiao Huo Luo Dan* and *Zhen Wu Tang*, each which contain *Fu zi* are listed – while *Fu zi* may be available in some markets it is restricted in Australia. What does the author substitute for *Fu zi*? These are minor criticisms overall as the book fills a valuable gap and allows Chinese medicine practitioners to easily incorporate a bioanatomical understanding of musculoskeletal disorders into their practice.

Close to the Bone is an essential text for both students and practitioners who seek to provide effective treatment for musculoskeletal disorders. A bioanatomical understanding of these disorders is also essential to be part of and communicate with the health team which supports athletes today. Practitioners who have an earlier edition could justify updating to this one with its improved attention to diagnosis and examination and discussion of myofascial trigger points. *Close to the Bone* supplements treatment focussed on underlying Chinese medical pathology with pragmatic and specific local treatment, and reminds us all that Chinese medical theory and the biomedical model can at times work very well together.

Reviewed by Stephen Janz

A guide to evidence-based integrative and complementary medicine

By Vicki Kosirilos, Luis Vitetta, and Avni Sali

Elsivier, 2011

ISBN 9780729539081

Picking up this book, any complementary medicine practitioner would have two questions: 1. What is integrative medicine? and 2. Is it possible to have an evidence-based approach to complementary medicine?

The book does answer these questions. In the Introduction, the authors define that integrative medicine is 'the practice of medicine in a way that relates to complete patient care', and includes 'practices currently beyond the scope of conventional medical teaching'. The authors continue to explain that the purpose of the book is to 'expand its (conventional medicine) boundaries, and to build a scientific foundation for integrating less well understood approaches...' I applaud the efforts and courage of the authors for pushing the boundaries and for bringing holistic practice back into medicine.

The book focuses on non-pharmaceutical interventions, including life style, mind-body medicine, stress management, dietary advice, acupuncture, herbal remedies, hypnosis, supplements, and other forms of complementary medicine. So in this book, integrative medicine refers to medical practice that incorporates complementary medicine in patient care.

How about the second question? There is much debate about whether evidence-based medicine, at its core being a reductionist approach to medicine, can be applied to assess the effect of complementary medicine, which is holistic in its nature. This book avoids this hard question, instead focuses on the results of clinical research, from systematic reviews to randomised controlled trials

and case reports. For every common health condition, the authors outline the possible complementary therapies and their levels of evidence. Obviously, as a health practitioner, I would be more likely to adopt the therapy that has the highest level of evidence. So in some way, it is possible to adopt evidence into practice of integrative or complementary medicine.

However, as the authors warn, the book does not intend to be prescriptive, and the practitioner and patient have to choose suitable therapies individually. Here comes the main drawback of the book: it does not explain how to choose the therapies individually. The authors cannot be blamed for this. Most trials in complementary medicine have too small a sample size to allow determining the optimal treatment regime, such as dose, duration and frequency.

Having addressed the two main questions, I can now give a summary of the book. It has three parts and 38 chapters. Part 1 defines the types of therapies included in the book; Part 2 details 34 common health conditions; and Part 3 discusses herb-nutrient-drug interaction and adverse reactions to complementary medicine. The health conditions include respiratory diseases (e.g. asthma), mental health (depression), various forms of cancer, metabolic conditions (diabetes), pain (fibromyalgia), women's health (menopause), cardiovascular diseases, and conditions of other systems. Each chapter starts with an introduction to the condition and a wide range of causes, from organic factors, life style factors, nutrient deficiency, to hormonal imbalance, infection and many others factors. This is then followed by a range of complementary treatment options, which are all supported with data from clinical studies. Information

about how the condition is treated medically is not presented.

There are two very useful tables to each chapter: one outlines the level of evidence of each treatment option; the other is a handout for patients, which lists all pieces of advice. For me the handout is way too complicated for patients to understand. But it is a great resource, from which every practitioner can develop one for their patients individually.

Furthermore, purchasing a hardcopy of the book gives you online access so that you search through the book quickly online. This is particularly helpful if you want to get a quick answer.

The authors are two prominent integrative medicine practitioners in Australia (Dr Vivki Kosirilos and Prof Avni Sali) and one expert researcher (A/Prof Luis Vitetta). Practitioners with various backgrounds have contributed to the book, and the content has been reviewed by a panel of medical practitioners and pharmacists.

Overall, I have found the book user friendly and informative. It is definitely a source from which I will draw information. This is a book that every health practitioner should have, particularly Chinese medicine practitioners, as most of us are not familiar with the various forms of complementary medicine that are outside of our training. But use the information with caution as each patient ought to be treated individually, so as to reflect the true spirit of integrative and complementary medicine.

Reviewed by Zhen Zheng

Pathomechanisms of the lung. Fei bing zhi bing ji.

By Li Zheng-Hua and Yan Shi-Lin
 Elsevier, 2011
 ISBN 9780912111872

Part of a series of offerings on the pathomechanisms of the five viscera, this book clearly offers a contemporary mainland Chinese approach to understanding lung patterns of disharmony. The authors do this by firstly offering statements relating to normal physiological function and then outline the kind of symptomatology that may be found should the pattern manifest. Reference to early Chinese medica are scattered throughout the text and used as a means of enriching the discussion about the patterns and their manifestation. The authors arrange the chapters into patterns that reflect pathomechanisms of repletion and vacuity. In addition, the authors provide special emphasis on lung yang vacuity and lung blood vacuity. A useful short summary is included at the end of each section. Treatment strategies are clearly aimed at the herbalist. No reference to acupuncture protocols is provided.

The text is a translation from the Chinese by westerners for western consumption. The original text precedes each translated section. Like many other English speaking practitioners, this reader is not fluent in Chinese and makes no comment on the veracity of the translation itself. Why the Chinese text is included in the offering is not made clear. If, say, the text set out to explore the original text as a means of understanding Chinese medical ideas such an inclusion would seem justified. One obvious question is, does the inclusion of the Chinese enhance the discussion on pathomechanisms? Continuing along the theme of translation, reference to source material usually to early Chinese medical texts used as a way of enhancing

discussion is given and presented in pinyin. However, the bibliography is offered is only in Chinese, which means the reader will not be able to locate the reference. Why the bibliography is only presented in Chinese and not translated, as offered in text, is not made clear. Was it an oversight?

The translation of Chinese medical terms follows Wiseman and for some could be seen as somewhat controversial as it differs from other English texts. Thus the reader is exposed to such terms as, 'impaired depurative downbearing,' 'impaired diffusion and downbearing,' 'counterflow ascent,' 'impaired diffusion of upper orifices' or 'lung cold with congealing blood.' Whilst many readers may be unfamiliar with such terms one could 'read between the lines' in their attempt to understand the meaning and then relate to a similar lung pathologies but labelled differently.

At the end of each section, the authors offer a neat and concise summary, which is useful. However, it does take a bit of an effort to see how the summary is linked to the in-text discussion.

What makes this book interesting, different and worthy to read is the way in which lung pathologies are organised and explained. The language used is evocative. For instance, the introductory paragraph of chapter two begins:

The lung is the 'florid canopy'. It is positioned in the upper burner and occupies the highest place. Under normal circumstances, the lung's qi dynamic performs depuration and downbearing. When the lung qi

depurates and downbears, it absorbs clear qi, distributes the subtle essences downward, distributes water and essence to the four directions, and moves simultaneously in all five channels. Thereby it safeguards the uninhibited flow in the pathways of qi and in the waterways. It enables *yang qi* to warm the five viscera, six bowels, four limbs, and hundred bones and allows them to be enriched by the fluids. At the same time, it is able to cleanse the lung connector and expel waste matter. As a result, all the viscera are naturally quiet.

In so far as treatment strategies, the book is tilted toward the application of herbal formulae. Given that the text is presented in a logical, concise manner and targeted to the clinician, it does seem strange that herb dosages are omitted.

Finally, the inclusion of pathologies that speak of yang and blood impairment is 'new' and different. Most available contemporary texts do not speak of such patterns. The authors do acknowledge this and offer a case for the inclusion of such patterns. The issue of lung yang and lung blood disorders nevertheless is worthy of further debate and exploration.

The book is relatively inexpensive and a welcome addition, given that Chinese medical texts are often expensive. More importantly, and putting aside some of its limitations, this book is worth buying! Why? It demonstrates how the 'same thing' can be said in different ways thereby enriching our understanding of Chinese medical ideas.

Reviewed by Peter Ferrigno