

AcuMedic practitioners target points in the ear Acupuncture with no need for needles

by TOM FOOT

ACUPUNCTURE, the 5,000-year-old practice of pricking pressure points with pins has become accepted as a popular remedy for a whole range of illnesses.

But now the influential Acu-medic centre in Camden High Street is using the ancient Chinese practice to tackle prevalent 21st-century problems like smoking and obesity as well as more serious conditions such as ME, MS, Hepatitis C, ovarian cysts, the menopause and impotence.

Acupuncturists claim cosmetic acupuncture improves circulation, which can make eyes brighter, hair stronger and shinier, and firm skin.

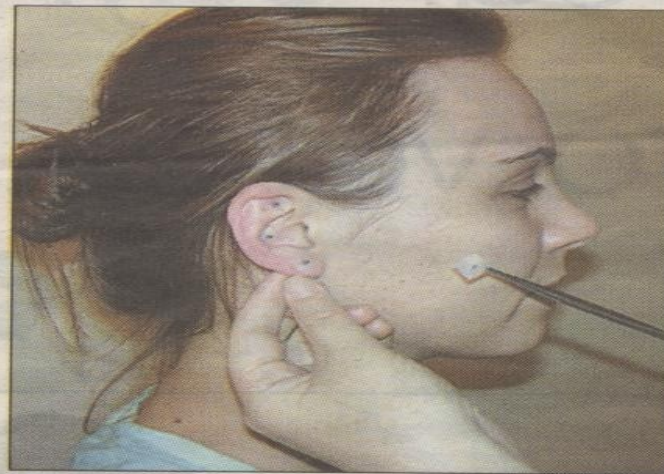
They say it makes a safe alternative to popular but controversial cosmetic surgery. Using cutting edge acupuncture techniques, already widespread in China, Dr Qilun Yuan targets pressure points in the

ear. These 'meridian' points are traditionally thought to affect limbs and organs inside the body. Chinese medicine uses the ear as a map of the human body, mirroring the foetus in the womb. But Dr Yuan believes the ear is also a map of the brain.

By tapping into the nervous system, using small "herbal seeds" placed in the ear (pictured), acupuncture can help beat the cravings for things like food or cigarettes. This type of no-needle acupuncture can help people relieve and prevent the withdrawal symptoms caused by nicotine addiction, such as nervousness, insomnia and depression.

Hungarian born Erika Szatmari, 35, who lost two stones in six weeks, explained the process.

She said: "They put little beads in your ear



AcuMedic employee Sasha Zabranska receiving 'ear-bead' treatment

that stay in permanently. You give them a little massage every five hours or so and they send messages to your brain. They gave me one that eases hunger. It doesn't starve you, just stops you eating rubbish. I lost two

stones in six weeks. I don't think people realise how effective it can be."

Dr Yuan said: "The points block the transmission of the hunger message. We don't have an obesity problem in China. Perhaps the

British should start to take notice."

Mrs Szatmari, who studied acupuncture at the University of Budapest before moving to Mornington Crescent seven years ago, said it was important not to get carried away with Eastern practices. She said: "Acupuncture is very affective for many illnesses. But if you need surgery, don't delay it with acupuncture - go to the hospital."

Dr Yuan was quick to discredit the Western practice of 'trigger-point' acupuncture, which does not use herbal remedies in tandem with the treatment. He said: "You cannot separate acupuncture from herbal remedies."

The government are considering proposals - put forward by the president of the Acu-Medic clinic, professor Benny Mei - to integrate acupuncture and Chinese herbal remedies into the NHS.