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Hide Age through **Acupuncture**

Want to have a face lift but without the huge expense of plastic surgery?
Then why not opt for an ancient alternative therapy?

By Tilusha Vyas

Face lifts, which have been popularised by Hollywood celebrities have until recently been the in-thing for the rich and famous. But, the explosion of the beauty industry in recent decades has made it easier for the less fortunate to maintain youthful appearances using the non-surgical treatments at affordable prices.

Some ancient eastern cultures have for centuries been using safe alternative-natural treatments that give just as good results as plastic surgery on the face – although not permanent. Chinese Cosmetic Acupuncture is a unique natural method of facial enhancement, which as a part of ancient Chinese system of medicine believes that in order to reflect external beauty or well being on the outside the internal body must first be healthy.

Professor Mansong Mei, the Director of the AcuMedic Clinic

Professor Mansong Mei, the director of the AcuMedic Clinic in Camden, North London, which offers a range of alternative therapies explained, "For over five thousand years, acupuncture has been used by the Chinese to invigorate your energy and blood circulation through the use of needles placed on parts of the body where there is a blood stasis – i.e. a blockage of the blood – which is stimulated to flow smoothly again and in turn this regenerates the blood cells. Thus the whole body starts to function properly once again."

Cosmetic Chinese acupuncture similarly involves the placing of very fine disposable surgical needles on certain points of the face (the wrinkles around the mouth, forehead and lines below the eyes), to clean blood and unblock the flow of Qi to the outer skin. This painless and relaxing treatment is said to result in a more radiant glow to the skin making it firmer and softer, as well as giving the eyes a brighter appearance and encouraging stronger and healthier hair growth on the head.

Gretta Millar-Reid

Mei pointed out that this treatment applied to the face actually benefits the entire body. "By way of placing the delicate needles on the face also helps to adjust any imbalance in the kidneys, heart, lungs or any other organ in the body."

Mei also explained that each disposable needle placed on any part of the body causes a sensation which in scientific terms tells the brain to release certain neuro-transmitters which in turn have an impact on the whole body – that is affects the faciology of the whole body. It's a holistic therapy that balances the ying and the yang – has a dual impact on the body –the outer and the inner. Professor Mei added, "By increasing the level of balance inside the body, the body will become healthier which in turn will increase the flow of blood to the face and give your face a healthy and glowing look as well as lifting the muscles– this is how acupuncture works."

Patients from all backgrounds including the late Princess Diana, have visited the AcuMedic Clinic for a range of illnesses and problems which acupuncture is said to help in alleviating.

Gretta Millar-Reid, 71, first came to the AcuMedic Clinic some nine years ago because she was suffering from oesophagus spasms – similar to a heart attack – and her problem was not getting better despite the medication she was taking.

Miller-Reid said, "I was working for a GP at that time in London. But the medication was not helping and because I believe in Chinese medicine, I decided to come here." Miller-Reid added, "Dr Lily started acupuncture treatment for my heart along with Chinese herbal drinks to help the internal organs – these drinks are a bit like detox for the body. I continued with this treatment along with my 8 tablets a day for about three months and I found that the symptoms started to abate. Now I take only 3 tablets a day and still take the herbal drinks which I boil every day just like tea. I feel much better."

She was so pleased with the results that Miller-Reid opted for acupuncture treatments for her back and other parts too. Since she was getting older she decided it was also time for a face uplift. She said, "So far I have had eight treatments last year on my face although they do recommend a course of twelve treatments once a week for the complete effect."

Late Princess Diana was a client at AcuMedic Clinic

Miller-Reid also revealed that she felt no pain with the needles placed on the face for about half an hour each time and they did not leave any marks either as they were cold and not heated. She added, "I want to start the face treatments again because with two treatments a week I noticed that the lines around my mouth, forehead and eyes were becoming smoother and even my face was looking fresher with a healthy glow – a more youthful appearance – not artificial like Botox which just plumps up the skin. This is a more natural and healthy look which needs no special creams afterwards as you continue to use what you normally use and as for the treatment it's not costly."

Mei assured that cosmetic acupuncture was safe and it did not leave any holes or pigmentation marks. He also emphasised that cosmetic acupuncture on the face would benefit more if it was accompanied with Chinese herbal medicine – in the form of herbal teas which help to balance the internal organs to function smoothly.

Only in recent years cosmetic acupuncture has become popular in the west where it is seen as a non-invasive treatment as it contains no chemicals and now some 10 percent of Mei's patients come just for cosmetic acupuncture. He has around two acupuncture treatments a week just for his own well-being. In China too it is the same as it is relatively cheap Chinese people have it regularly as treatments or just for well being. In Britain acupuncture is also recognised by the NHS.