Clara

Did you know that the journey of a cancer patient doesn't end with the last treatment? Can you guess what percentage of cancer survivors continue to experience physical and emotional challenges post-treatment? It's quite astonishing actually, but research indicates that approximately 60 percent of cancer survivors experience long-term physical and emotional challenges.

after they are done their treatment. And these can range from fatigue, hot flashes, pain, anxiety, depression, and so much more. This truly highlights the critical role that ongoing support, including acupuncture, plays in the life of a cancer survivor. It's not just about surviving cancer, it's truly about thriving after cancer.

When Patients are diagnosed cancer-free. It's a great day. However, it's really important to see that they need support still. It makes sense, right? In today's show, I'm going to do something a little bit different. I'm going to split it into two. Parts, two related parts, trying to bridge ancient Chinese medicine with modern practice.

So what we're going to talk about is that in the first part, I'm going to dive into how, as practitioners, we can support cancer patients while they're going through chemo, and radiation, as well as share my protocols for pre- and post surgery to reduce side effects and to help speed recovery for our patients.

In the second half, I'm so excited because I have a special guest, a renowned author and acupuncturist who will share invaluable insights on treating cancer survivorship patients. Her book is a groundbreaking resource that guides practitioners in navigating this Delicate area of acupuncture care, but this area is so needed, as you heard from the statistic I shared when we first started the show.

We all have been touched by cancer, whether it's personal or with friends or family. Using acupuncture to support cancer patients and survivors of cancer should be part of every practitioner's practice. This is why I wanted to do this show. Welcome to Acupro, a show dedicated to making Chinese medicine and acupuncture easy to grasp and fun to learn.

Hi there! If it's your first time here, I'm your host, Clara Cohen. I have been a licensed acupuncturist since 2003, and I support practitioners and students in changing the world one patient at a time. My goal is to share my passion for TCM and empower you. to achieve superior patient care. I love to showcase the amazing benefits of acupuncture because after all, acupuncture rocks!

Everyone is afraid of the big C, the capital C. Nobody wants to get that dreaded diagnosis and hear these words. It's cancer. And generally, right after receiving this shocking news, this scary news, patients are thrown into a whirlwind of treatments that often start the very next day. They

don't even have time to process what just happened or talk to the family of what's going to happen in the next few weeks.

Not only they are experiencing emotional trauma and shock, but now their bodies are also being put through a physical shock as well. I truly believe our role as practitioners is to assist patients through their path in beating this disease, whatever their decision may be, conventional route, integrative medicine, or completely natural.

Knowing the strengths as well as the limitations of our medicine is key to helping support cancer patients. Did you know the most common cancers globally include breast cancer? lung, colorectal, and prostate cancer. Remarkably, the survival rate of these cancers has been improving over the years.

That's really good news. For instance, the five-year survival rate for breast cancer is now 90%. That's fantastic. For prostate, it's 98%. Even better. While unfortunately for colorectal cancer, the survivor rate is about 65%, and unfortunately lung cancer, as we see with patients or family and friends, however, remains the more challenging one with a five year survivor rate of only 19%.

One of my friend's father passed away of lung cancer, and when he was diagnosed, he, passed away three months later. It's very fast and it's very rare to survive that cancer. So it makes it very difficult to be diagnosed with this particular cancer because the rate of surviving is so low, right? These statistics underscore though the importance of early detection and specifically the advancement in treatment in people recovering and in supporting patients through acupuncture because we can help them manage side effects of chemo, radiation, or post-surgery, and improve the quality of life during and after cancer treatment.

So let's look at how TCM views cancer in general. The cancer causes, according to TCM, are very much lifestyle-related, like diet, smoking, and stress, but also environmental, depending on the environment people are working in on a daily basis or exposed to, emotional trauma, that's very, very common with years and years of emotional trauma or that happened in the past and we're not able to process, weak constitution, that's more genetic or weak essence, but also external pathogen can also lead it.

to some issues eventually. And then the pathology of cancer in TCM is a combination specifically of blood stasis, toxic heat, and phlegm, either phlegm and damp, depending if there is a tumor or not, right? So those are the basics. It doesn't mean that that's all it is, but it's the start and the basic pathology or pattern in TCM.

The role of the practitioner when supporting cancer patient is obviously prevention by detecting a patient's imbalance early, right? We can see that maybe there's something really wrong with the patients. We need to send them for tests and see their medical doctor and see what else can be done for them to figure out what's wrong with them, right?

As well as, of course, prevention of reoccurrence. This is when we want to treat patients post-survivorship. And we can help reduce side effects for chemotherapy and or radiation, and prepare patients for surgery, and to help them recover post-surgery with symptoms. management. So I'm going to look at radiation, chemotherapy, post and pre-surgery.

So let's start with radiation. TCM treatment principles when it comes to radiation because radiation creates a lot of heat in the body. So it's to clear heat, detoxify, to prevent inflammatory reactions. It's nourishing yin to promote body fluid production and relieve dryness symptoms. It's also supports liver, kidney, and heart to relieve fatigue, depression, palpitation, or shortness of breath.

It's strengthening the spleen and harmonizing the stomach to relieve digestive problems such as nausea, vomiting, poor appetite, and diarrhea, which are often associated as side effects. with radiation. So when it comes to clearing heat and reducing inflammation, we can use points like Stomach 44, Large Intestine 11, Spleen 10, and San Jiao 6.

Those are great to also help with digestion, specifically if there's **constipation, San Jiao 6** would be very useful. We want to nourish yin to promote body fluid in order to relieve dryness. Kidney 7 is great for that. Kidney 6 is great for that. We want to strengthen the liver, the kidney, the heart, and we want to boost the spleen and stomach for relieving all the digestive system issues.

So we're going to do Stomach 36. Spleen 6, REN 6, DU 20 to lift energy for fatigue. That would be a really good one. And we can use PC 6, REN 12 to bring Stomach Qi down when there's a lot of vomiting and nausea. Does that make sense? Right? Depending on where you are. While listening to this podcast, do not worry that you can't take notes because maybe you're driving or you're going on a walk somewhere.

I have all the notes taken for you in the show notes and I'll put the link to it. So do not worry. I'll have everything for you in the show notes. When it comes to supporting patients during chemotherapy, the TCM treatment principles are to protect the organs and the tissues, to help with bone marrow production, to help the immune system or support it because it will have to fight, right, to kind of try to keep the body strong.

Reduce side effects, of course, of the medication. and promote hair growth. So how do we do this? Well, we need to protect organs and tissues, specifically the kidney, because the kidney is going to be affected and essence is going to be affected because chemotherapy really ages us and depletes our whole body.

And we see that because we lose the hair on our head. So kidney essence gets depleted. Make sense? So we start by doing points like kidney six, kidney three, kidney seven, really supporting the kidneys and essence. So we want to support the bone marrow with Gallbladder 39 and Bladder 11 because Bladder 11 is the influential point of the bones and Gallbladder 39 is the influential point of the marrow.

We also want to help boost the immune system with Stomach 36, Lung 7, that would work really well. We want to help reduce the side effects of chemotherapy. So again, we can support the digestive system with REN 12, Pericardium 6, and of course, Stomach 36, which is also mentioned for the immune system, right?

And we have to also lift the energy because chemo is really tiring. So DU 20, REN 6, Spleen 6 will lift the energy of the patient. And of course, you can calm the mind with Yintong to kind of relieve the stress part. Now when it comes to hair growth, Patients with chemo most of the time are going to lose hair.

So when it comes to promoting hair growth, we want to use the 7 star sometimes called plum blossom to really get some blood circulation on the head to activate the hair follicle to promote hair growth. So we tap it on the head very gently and this is used a lot for patients that have alopecia or that lose their hair depending on the cause like with chemotherapy.

This whole cancer protocol I'm sharing with you today is part of my third book, Chinese Medicine Treatments Made Easy. By popular demand, I have created this book that contains over 160 common syndromes with all the patterns or the basic patterns associated with each syndrome. And then I share acupuncture points protocol, herbal formulas, ear points, diet, and so much more.

Plus, I add up my clinical pearls. It's literally a game changer for acupuncture students, but especially for practitioners. You can download the digital version on any device, and it comes with many video links to complement it. Or, if you're like me, and you like a real book, the hard copy version ships all over the world.

But before you invest in my Chinese medicine treatment made easy, I want to make sure it's everything you were looking for. So you can download a sample of it. The link is in the show notes below, or you can go to my website, acuproacademy.com and click the shop tab on the menu bar. You won't regret it. I put so much heart and soul in it and the feedback has been amazing.

I hope you enjoy and benefit from it. And in turn, your patient does as well. Before we start talking about pre and post-surgery, how often should we treat chemo patients and radiation patients? Usually, once a week is great. Probably after the chemotherapy because the person is going to be really tired for the next couple of days.

So maybe in the next couple of days after the weekly treatment, if they do get weekly treatment. I've seen patients going through chemo once a month, every four weeks. I will treat them weekly to really strengthen them. in order to prepare for the next treatment. Does that make sense? So usually weekly sessions are best and that's what I've seen in practice.

Now let's talk about pre and post-surgery. Patients may go through surgery because we have to remove tumors or remove an area of the body that's been affected by cancer growth, right? So when it comes to the TCM treatment principle for pre-surgery, and usually we try to do this two to three weeks prior to surgery and have two weekly sessions.

So it'd be great to have about five to six sessions before the patient gets into the surgery. And what we want to do is prior, we want to nourish Liver, blood and tonify Kidney Qi so the person can handle the surgery. and the body can handle the surgery better. How do we do this? We can use ear acupuncture, specifically: Shenmen, Sympathetic, Liver, and Kidney point on the ear.

And for body point, it'd be great to do Kidney 6, Lung 7, REN 6, Spleen 6, Stomach 36, DU 20. So we're really elevating that energy, right? We really want to bring that Qi up. We want to calm the person because surgery is always stressful with Yin Tang, probably Heart 7, or REN 17. Anything that you think is best for your patient to calm their mind.

If we're using also ear acupuncture, Shenmen and Sympathetic, will do very well as well to calm the mind. When it comes to post-surgery, the TCM treatment principle applies for any kind of surgery. It doesn't matter if it's cancer-related or not. And again, we want to do probably two sessions a week for two to three weeks after surgery, depending on the strength of the patient, the age of the patients when they're going in.

Now, the treatment can begin within one week of post-surgery, as long as the patient is able to come and see you, right? So what we want to do then is tonify the Spleen and Stomach Qi. Move Liver Qi and relieve pain because of course we want to strengthen the immune system to heal faster. And also we want to relieve the pain as well.

So for strengthening the immune system of course and tonifying Spleen and Stomach Qi, we're going to do Stomach 36, we're going to do Spleen 6, right? And then we want to move Liver Qi and relieve pain. So Large Intestine 4 will relieve the pain. Liver 3 will move Liver Qi. If there's heat, then we want to add up Liver 2, and bring the heat down.

If there's fire, Stomach 44. If there's a lot of constipation, Stomach 25 and Stomach 37, because Stomach 37 is the lower rossi point of the large intestine and it's great for excess heat. And then Stomach 25, of course, is the Front-Mu point of the Large Intestine, so very useful when there's constipation.

We can also use Ear Shen Men, Sympathetic Liver and Kidney. So it's the same post and pre-surgery for the ear acupuncture point. We still want to tonify the kidney, we still want to address Liver and the stress, and then calm the mind with Shen Me and Sympathetic. So this is a pretty basic treatment protocol that I used over the years and I hope you can use it as well.

Again, do not worry, I have taken all the notes for you and it's all in the show notes. Now let's go on to part two of this episode which is to look at cancer survivorship with my guest Beverly DeValois.

I am so excited you are here today because my guest is so passionate about cancer survivorship. You are going to love Beverly Dua. I love her name because I can pronounce it a la French.

It makes me so happy. Beverly is from the UK and she has so much experience when it comes to helping and supporting cancer patients and post-cancer patients, specifically because the survivors of cancer don't have a lot of support she is here to tell us what we can do and what are the key symptoms that they experience once they've been, free of cancer from their oncologist.

She has so much value to share with you today. I can't wait. For you to listen to. Beverly, let's go.

Welcome Beverly, to the show. I'm so thankful you agreed to come to the Acupro show today because we haven't met yet, and I have so many questions for you. So welcome.

Beverley

Thank you very much, and it's such an honor to be on your show. Clara, thank you so much for inviting me. It's great.

Clara

So before we start, I'm gonna introduce you to people who may not have heard of you, even though you have done so much.

I'm so impressed. Beverly, first of all, you've been practicing for 25 years, so you have lots of experience. And one of the things that struck me when I was reading your bio, because again, we haven't met, is that you opened the first acupuncture clinic in the UK to treat cancer survivors post-treatment.

And I think that such a massive undertaking, but so useful and so needed. I think you have been described as the acupuncture authority on cancer survivorship in the UK and probably more than just the UK.

You have a book, which is the Acupuncture and Cancer Survivorship: Recovery, Renewal, and Transformation. You also have a PhD, focusing on using acupuncture to manage breast cancer. So obviously cancer is your wheelhouse on everything.

You are also a pioneer researcher on acupuncture's impact on the quality of life for cancer survivors, specifically with Lymphedema and Prostate cancer.

You have done a lot. But I just wanna start with my first question because I think we all think that.How did you end up focusing everything, studies and practice, and patients and books on cancer?

Beverley

A long time ago, before I was an acupuncturist I read a book and it was a book called The Death of a Woman, which doesn't sound very optimistic, but it was about a woman and her psychotherapist's journey through cancer. And when I put that book down, I just thought I know what I want to do.

I want to work with cancer, I want to work with people with cancer. I was just recently trained as an aromatherapist at that time. It's about 30 years ago, and then when I volunteered. At a hospital in London. And one day this woman came up to me and she said, I want some aromatherapy for my cancer patients. Would you do this for me? She was the lead Nurse for the McMillan Oncology and palliative care team there. And she made a place for me and her team. She got the money together to fund me and I worked for her. was there for seven years with that team and it was really fantastic experience. During that time I was training as an acupuncturist. I started my acupuncture training and I wanted to do acupuncture there as well. But it wasn't the right place. They weren't ready for that. Fortunately, I'd been on a conference where I met someone, lots of other people in the cancer field and one of those contacts wanted a job share in a cancer center and she contacted me and said, would you be interested in doing, a job, share with me? And rest is history, that's how I started.

Clara

When you were doing aroma therapy with the patients: What did you focus on? Like nausea or digestive issues? Like What did you do?

Beverley

30 years ago, it was very new. And very little was known. There wasn't much known about it. So things have changed enormously and much more is known. And there's a much more enlightened view about the value of, interventions like massage and acupuncture.

They were just worried about acupuncture being delivered by what they call the layperson. So if it was a medic, they would've been happy for someone to. To deliver acupuncture in that setting. So I had to fight, and that's really how I became a researcher. were worried about me delivering this intervention even though they hired me knowing I was an acupuncturist and that's what I wanted to do.

And in those days, again, the professional bodies, they didn't have a lot of material developed, so there was nothing impressive that I could hand over to them to say, this is, and we know these things. There was no evidence really.

The biggest problem that people coming into the center at that time were having was women with breast cancer related hot flushes. So we did a survey and we found out whether they'd be interested in having acupuncture. It was very early days. I think there were about three papers published and they, none of them were very big studies at that time. On hot flashes.

So we were really at the leading edge. And so we did a study using a kind of semi individualized Chinese medicine approach to this. We had good results. We had very good results. There's nothing like that feeling when you press the button and it turns out the results.

And my manager who was doing the analysis, said took that out on the road and presented that at some conferences. And then someone came up to me a medical acupuncturist said that's really good, but can't you do something that's a simpler intervention?

So we thought about that and then I thought I'd been working with the NADA ear acupuncture protocol, the five-point protocol. And that anecdotally was said to be good for hot flushes, the hot flushes and night sweats associated with withdrawal. So we decided to try that on women with breast cancer. So we did another study. those two studies became my PhD.

Based on that study, they decided to start an ear acupuncture service for, breast cancer-related heart flashes that ran for 15 years all during that time we collected data. So we had 15 years of data and when the pandemic came, we had this huge body of data and time.

Clara

That's fantastic. What strikes me there is, that I love NADA protocol and for people that are not familiar with NADA protocol, you can check it out. I think it's an acute detox.org is their website, but it's five auricular or Ear point, Shen Men, Sympathetic, Liver, Kidney, and Lung. I use it in my practice specifically for addiction. So I'm fascinated by the fact that you guys used it and had the. The idea of using the NADA protocol for cancer patients for hot flashes and night sweats, and it actually gave you data.

So this is so fascinating. This is why I love Chinese medicine and acupuncture, is that we can try different things to see what the result or how people respond to it. And what you did there was fantastic.

Do you have a private practice and do people know that this is your passion and your focus? And how did you make sure that people would be aware that they can come and see you? 'cause you have the knowledge and you have so many years of experience.

Beverley

You know what? I didn't.

I haven't done that till now. Kind of strange thing happened when I talked about working with the Macmillan team as an aromatherapist. And one of the nice things about that was I was very embedded in the team. And that the Macmillan nurses would they would refer, Patients that I should see, they would brief me on those patients.

They would tell me about what tumor they had and what the problems were with them. And if I had questions, I had someone immediately there. And when I stopped working there and I set up my private practice as an acupuncturist I really felt the loss of that support. And so I was doing acupuncture within the cancer center during my studies. It took me a long time before I started working with cancer patients again in my private practice.

You know when you have the support of obviously an entity it's gonna be very different than when you are a solopreneur or you are on your own in your practice for sure. And it's something you haven't done before.

Clara

So it feels like you're starting a new, even though you don't, you have the knowledge, but yeah, absolutely. I could see that. So now I know you obviously wrote a book acupuncture and Cancer Survivorship. First of all, who is this book dedicated to? Is it for practitioners, for students of acupuncture?

Is it for survivors of cancer? And what are the key points that you really go and dive into in this book?

Beverley

Okay the book is primarily written for acupuncture practitioners, it's not directed at a particular style of acupuncture. So really what I'm doing is trying to, inform, and make people aware of cancer survivorship and what the issues are there. And if we can come back to that in a minute so that there's a context there and that any kind of practitioner, acupuncture practitioner can slot their style of acupuncture into it.

My own background, I trained at the College of Integrated Chinese Medicine in reading in the UK and they teach what they call integrated acupuncture. They teach Chinese medicine, acupuncture, or. TCM style along with five elements. So I always say with that kind of background, I grew up bilingual in Chinese medicine, so I had these two systems and they were very helpful.

There were a lot of challenges and using two systems. I'm not attached to any particular style. I'm happy to use what works and to explore other styles. That was the ethos of my book., this problem. Brought my style to, so that might be of interest to you, but basically it's over to you to assemble your own toolkit and work out how you would approach these solutions. And as I'm developing my training offering, I'm working more towards that kind of workshop type of effort.

So to go back to your question it's directed at acupuncture practitioners, although I'm hoping and certainly the reviews that are coming in from other healthcare professionals, they're saying that this is useful for other people as well.

It's a very good basic text for understanding cancer, but also the issues around cancer survivorship. this is what drives me, making people aware of cancer survivorship and what the issues are. The common perception is once a person goes through their treatment, when they finish their, surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy, whatever it is, that's kind of the end of the journey. That's the kind of popular understanding.

Everybody thinks life gets back to normal when you get to that stage. But the reality is that there are still challenges for many, if not most cancer survivors. When their treatment ended, this wasn't recognized until probably the turn of when, suddenly they had amassed such a population of cancer survivors people the medical people were noticing was that they weren't okay at the end.

It didn't end with the end of cancer treatment and they were living with long-term chronic problems that weren't being addressed. And so that gave birth to the survivorship. And there still is that gap in care for those people post-treatment. So I want acupuncturists to be in there filling that gap. There's an opportunity for really acupuncture to perform and really help because acupuncture, offers a non-pharmacological approach. The evidence base is very good for acupuncture. It's very good. But guidelines are now coming out recommending acupuncture for. Oncology. So my book helps to spread the word I guess on.

Clara

Can you give me three examples of symptoms that are affecting post-cancer or survivorship of cancer patients that are very common that you see a lot?

Beverley

Hot flushes are the big ones. With breast cancer and prostate cancer, up to 80% of those people will experience hot flashes. So that's, breast cancer and prostate cancer, two of the most common cancers worldwide. you've got huge. The problem there that isn't easily addressed with medication, very often those people don't want to take more medication.

So acupuncture works very well in helping to manage those. And, it helps to sort out lots of associated problems with hot flushes. People with night sweats don't sleep. There are

confidence issues, there's a real cluster of symptoms around hot flashes. It's not just a hot flash. So that's one. Chronic pain is another one. People will often have pain from surgical interventions from radiotherapy, chemotherapy and dysperipheral neuropathy. Long-term, adjuvant hormonal treatments that are given to people.

Often the side effect is joint and muscle pain. So there are all sorts of types of pain that acupuncture can help address. The other one would be fatigue. Fatigue after post-cancer treatment-related fatigue. But the other area that I'm really interested in, and that is acupuncture is really useful in the multidisciplinary care of is lymphedema.

So cancer-related lymphedema should be by lymphedema specialists, people with lymphedema are told they can't have acupuncture or their understanding is they can't have acupuncture. Acupuncture is very helpful for people with lymphedema. I personally wouldn't advocate trying to treat the lymphedema itself with acupuncture. Still, you can use it alongside that treatment to really help people cope much better with that very disabling, chronic long-term side effect of cancer treatment.

Clara

I've treated a lot of patients that went through chemo or radiation while they were going through it, and it's basically addressing the side effects. So they go through all the chemo or radiation in a way that, allows them to continue to. Live their life.

So with decreasing nausea and fatigue, like you said it's interesting 'cause obviously every country is different, and you're right, there are some oncologists that will say, oh, you shouldn't get acupuncture. Other ones will say, absolutely. If it makes you feel better, then go for it.

Right. And you're right, we're not treating the cancer. We're just allowing the person's body to fight it in the best capacity they can. By doing acupuncture, by lessening all the symptoms, that is really difficult to have on top of the emotional aspect, and that's one that I wanted to ask you question wise is.

I know a lot of people can see counselors and there's a lot of support group for cancer survivors and do you address the emotional aspect as a root cause of some of the cancer patients that you see?

Beverley

I always address the emotional aspects. Yes. Because I think you can't separate it, the whole process of writing a book is very interesting, but it's like when I got to the end of the book, a lot of things crystallized for me. And again, I changed the way I approach these people, and I almost, almost always now address the trauma first before I start addressing the actual symptoms.

The TCM point is, that there's always a root cause. We may not be able to treat everything, but there's always a root cause. And in my practice, I always see 70% of people that come with chronic disorders being cancer or not have the root cause for me as longstanding emotional, either trauma or stress or whatever it is that's happening, but it's affecting their emotional well-being, which of course reflects into creating physical symptoms.

Clara

I really appreciate you coming today and sharing your wisdom and your knowledge. I know we're going to meet in a couple of weeks on May 18th 'cause I'm going to the UK and we found out we gonna speak at the same conference.

You were really kind before we started this podcast, you asked really kindly and said, do you want me to give a. Discount on my book to your audience, and I was like, oh my God, that's super, super sweet.

So I know we're gonna put the link in the show note, but I really appreciate you giving a discount to the audience that would love to learn more and be able to focus a little bit more and be able to make an impact with their cancer and post-cancer survivors. So I really appreciate that, Beverley. Thank you.

Beverley

Thank you. Thank you. It's my pleasure. And thank you so much for having me and for letting me talk about, you know, my passion, cancer survivorship.

Clara

Thank you so much for spending your time with me today. I truly hope you benefited from this episode and I would love for you to share it with a friend that may benefit from it as well. Follow the show, leave a review, and if you want more, go to my website acuproacademy.com. I have tons of resources there with treatment protocols, case studies, free courses, and so much more.

And connect with me on all social media @acuproacademy. I'm on YouTube, Instagram, Facebook. And no matter what, keep rocking it using TCM.

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