Cupping Therapy: Ancient Medicine
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Affinity Medical Group
Integrative Medicine
Affinity’s Integrative Medicine Program

Consults—Drs. Kimbrough and Norden
- Treatment plans include nutrition, physical activity, stress management, supplements

Acupuncture---Dr. Elizabeth Kimbrough, Dr. Jennifer Norden and Corrine Rathbun, L.Ac.

Massage Therapy---Tammy Collar, LMT

Classes—mindfulness meditation, yoga, Tai Chi

IM Services in Oshkosh and Greenville
Traditional Chinese Medicine

Developed over 3,000 years ago in China (Taoist, Buddhist, Confucian Philosophies)

Modalities: Acupuncture, Massage, (Tui Na, Gua Sha, Cupping), Nutrition, Herbalism, Exercise, Meditation, Feng Shui

Huang Di, “The Yellow Emperor”, cultural hero and father of Traditional Chinese Medicine
Traditional Chinese Medicine Theory

- Modalities promote flow of Qi - Chinese word representing the concept of energy

- Qi circulates through the meridians

- Balances yin and yang, 2 opposing factors in everything (ex: water/fire, night/day)

- Restores balance and harmony
Acu-points

• Acu-points are points along each meridian where Qi is easily manipulated (on or near a nerve)

• Modalities are applied to these points - Acupuncture, Massage, Moxibustion, or Cupping to help restore the flow of Qi.

• There are several hundred acu-points (over 600 meridian points plus extra points).

• Each point is very individual, can be categorized in many different ways, and has its own indications and contraindications.
Cupping Therapy
GETTING CUPPED

How does dry cupping work?

1. Where to do it
   - Fleshy sites on the body, such as the back and stomach (and, to a lesser extent, the arms and legs), are the preferred sites for treatment.

2. Effects
   - Drawing up the skin in the cup is believed to open up the skin's pores, which helps to stimulate:
     - The flow of blood
     - Balances and realigns the flow of qi
     - Breaks up obstructions
     - Creates an avenue for toxins to be drawn out of the body

3. The cups
   - Most acupuncturists use cups made of thick glass or plastic. Glass cups allow the acupuncturist to see the skin and evaluate the effects of treatment.

4. Other types
   - AIR CUPPING: Instead of using fire to draw the oxygen out of the cup, a cup with a suction pump is used
   - WET CUPPING: The skin is punctured before the cup is placed on it. When the suction from the cup draws the skin up, a small amount of blood is drawn up. This is believed to remove toxins from the body.

5. In China, cupping is used primarily to treat conditions such as:
   - Bronchitis
   - Asthma and congestion
   - Arthritis
   - Infertility
   - Athlete's foot
   - Cancer
   - Headaches
   - Alzheimer's
   - Kidney problems
   - Liver problems
   - Gastrointestinal disorders
   - Certain types of pain
Olympic Athletes Use Cupping Too!
gaining Recognition in Popular Culture

Jennifer Aniston

David Arquette

Gwyneth Paltrow
• Reaction lasting from 1 day to several weeks
• Mild or no discomfort
Cupping History

Cupping has been used for thousands of years in cultures throughout the world including Native North Americans.

Ancient Egyptians wrote about in Ebers Papyrus (2500 B.C.)

Hippocrates recommended to Ancient Greeks (500 B.C.)

Chinese recommended in Bo Shu (Han Dynasty, 200 B.C.)

Hejamah in Middle East

Began as blood letting and abscess treatment (as acupuncture)
Has been applied as a formal modality in hospitals in China since the 1950’s

Modern America – Myofascial Decompression (PTs, LMTs, LATs)
Cupping Tools
## Cupping Procedures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Conditions Treated/Benefits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stationary/Retained Cupping</td>
<td>Joint pain, arthritis, myofascial pain, headaches, most used in clinic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sliding, Moving Cupping</td>
<td>Myofascial pain, scarring, headaches, often used in clinic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Needle Cupping</td>
<td>Stimulates acu-points further, treating a variety of conditions including pain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flash Cupping</td>
<td>Used for facial issues – palsy, acne, sinus pressure. Cup placed, immediately removed and repeated</td>
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- Increase in mean active and passive ranges of motion, a reduction in pain scores and increase in wellbeing immediately following treatment

- Increased improvement one, two and three weeks post-treatment

- Maximum level of pain reduced by 50% at the end of the study.
An Updated Review of the Efficacy of Cupping Therapy. University Western Sydney, Australia and Center for Evidence-Based Chinese Medicine, Beijing, China. 2012.

108 trials reviewed for various types of cupping.

Meta-analysis revealed that cupping therapy combined with other treatments (acupuncture/medications) showed significant benefit over treatments alone in effecting a cure for cervical spondylosis.

The results of this systematic review suggest that cupping therapy appears to be effective for various diseases/conditions in particular herpes zoster, acne, facial paralysis, lumbar disc herniation and cervical spondylosis.
Figure 1. Constituent ratios of types of cupping therapy.

doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0031793
http://127.0.0.1:8081/plosone/article?id=info:doi/10.1371/journal.pone.0031793
Further randomized controlled trials needed with improved quality according to Cochrane risk of bias tool.

Longer term studies need to be conducted for other musculo-skeletal conditions.
Benefits

**Increased Circulation** - Hyperaemia, vasodilation
- Increased oxygen for healing, improved ROM
- Warms tissues, increases ROM

**Pain Relief** - Action similar to acupuncture or massage
- Neurotransmitter release: endorphins, serotonin, cortisol, enkephalin secretion
- Gate-Control Theory
Benefits

Activates Immune System
- Releases immune modulators
- CD4 lymphocytes, natural killer cells, cytokines, immunoglobulin

Removal of Heat or Toxins
- Herpes zoster, acne

Increases Sense of Well-Being
- Balances nervous system
- Decreases stress, tension
Cupping for Orthopedic Conditions

Arthritis
Neck and Back Pain
Sciatica
Joint Pain – elbows, knees, hips, ankles
Frozen Shoulder
Decreased ROM
Muscle Strains
Contraindications and Safety

Avoid cupping pregnant patients, areas of bone fractures, skin ulcers
Avoid sun exposure following treatment at treated area
Increase fluids following treatment
Cost/Insurance

VA covers for cupping therapy as vasopneumatic device therapy
Often performed following acupuncture treatment - cost $22
Performed with massage therapy session – cost $35 - $70
No referral is necessary
Appropriate treatment for many orthopedic and sports medicine conditions - soft tissues and joints
Ancient, time tested treatment
Research is positive, but more is needed
Safe
Cost effective
Can be done alone or in conjunction with other treatments
– Integrative Medicine treatments - acupuncture/massage
– Standard conventional care