

## Acupuncture Practice in Dentistry in Japan

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### 1. History of Acupuncture-Moxibustion in Dentistry in Japan

In 1972, James Reston of New York Times, a reporter on President Nixon's trip to China reported to the world the beneficial effects of acupuncture anesthesia. This led to an increased awareness of acupuncture treatment in Japan, further leading to advances in researches and the introduction of acupuncture-moxibustion in various clinical sites.

The Japan Dental Society of Oriental Medicine serves as a major center for providing education on the use of oriental medicine and practical acupuncture-moxibustion training in dentistry. Some dental universities include this education in their curriculum. The Society was formed in 1979 when WHO issued the statement of recommendation to its member states for positive use of acupuncture as part of modern medicine. Kunio Matudaira, the first chairman of the Society was the first dental surgeon who introduced acupuncture into clinical dentistry, practicing acupuncture in the form of anesthesia and pain relief in patients undergoing dental extraction or those with other dental problems. Akira Fukuoka, the second chairman of the Society promoted further clinical applications of oriental medicine in dentistry. Michizo Matsuo, the third chairman of the Society, made a great contribution in nurturing the Society to the present nationwide organization. Koichi Okamura, the fourth president of the Society, deepened ties with China from the viewpoint of integration of traditional Chinese and Western medicine. The Society's history is now taken over by incumbent president Koichi Okamura. The membership is comprised mainly of clinicians (as of 2008, 900 members), many of whom are trying to willingly administer acupuncture treatment.

### 2. Indications for acupuncture-moxibustion in dentistry

The use of acupuncture is not limited only to anesthesia for dental extraction and analgesia in patients suffering dental pain. It is now extended to the treatment of oral diseases as shown below.

- 1) Diseases of oral mucosa: Recurrent stomatitis, stomatitis herpetica, herpes zoster, oral candidosis, lichen planus, leukoplakia
- 2) Diseases of lips: Angular stomatitis, chronic cheilitis
- 3) Diseases of Tongue: Geographical tongue, median rhomboid glossitis, glossalgia
- 4) Diseases of salivary glands: Salivary calculi, dry mouth
- 5) Diseases of nervous system: Trigeminal neuralgia, facial nerve paralysis
- 6) Disease of jaw joints: Jaw (temporomandibular) joint disorder, jaw joint dislocation
- 7) Oral and maxillofacial inflammation: Pericoronitis of wisdom tooth

Acupuncture-moxibustion treatment exerts its efficacy especially for the diseases for which therapeutic modalities of modern medicine have not been established, such as diseases of oral mucosa, nerves, dry mouth, and jaw joints.

### 3. Future Vision for Acupuncture-Moxibustion in Dentistry

Acupuncture-moxibustion currently practiced in Japan, which was introduced to Japan from ancient China, is classified into three groups:

- (1) traditional acupuncture-moxibustion advanced in Japan with its own style;
- (2) acupuncture-moxibustion of Western medicine nature based on anatomy, physiology, and pathology; and
- (3) acupuncture-moxibustion of traditional Chinese medicine. In order to respond to a variety of intractable oral diseases, it is desirable that remedial procedures with acupuncture-moxibustion be established based on scientific grounds built by the integration of advantages of oriental-Western medicine.