

FEATURE

New Heights for NZ Acupuncture Research

The old adage “a rolling stone gathers no moss” could be applied to Debra Betts in terms of her career progression and contributions to the acupuncture profession. Trained as a neonate nurse, she became interested in acupuncture while working in the UK. Little did she realize how much this would influence her future career direction.

In the years following her return to NZ Debra became known for her obstetric acupuncture. “Acupressure for Labour”, a booklet for couples, began her writing career. “Acupuncture in Pregnancy & Childbirth” followed and its publication led to invitations to lecture, from around the globe. Often on a lecture circuit, she was not only presenting her material but also rubbing shoulders with other acupuncture and TCM experts contributing to the evolving understanding of TCM in a modern context, “It’s exciting meeting other practitioners and learning what they are doing in acupuncture research and to see how this is evolving”

Such was the recognition for her work in obstetric acupuncture that she was offered a PhD scholarship from UWS to study acupuncture and its effects on threatened miscarriage. Through a RCT pilot study, surveys, forum analysis and interviews of the affected women and health professionals, Debra gained valuable insight into what was deemed useful to these women.

Often the western medical approach was to deliver the ‘facts’ and avoid ‘false hope’. TCM practitioners, on the other hand, while acknowledging the serious implications of the presenting symptoms, are also able to offer the supportive care of acupuncture, lifestyle and dietary recommendations from an empowering perspective. Debra explains, “By presenting to the patient the TCM paradigm, understanding of qi and how they can nourish the qi to influence the body they were better equipped to manage in the best way possible.”



Debra’s brilliant achievements were celebrated at the Alumni Dinner in April. Pictured: Debra Betts (centre) with NZSATCM Directors A.M. Olatunji and Karuna Olatunji

Interestingly, all the participants in the trial spoke of how much they valued the support they received. What was of statistically significance was that those women receiving acupuncture experienced a reduction in symptoms related to threatened miscarriage, including bleeding, cramping, back pain, and emotional distress.

Although Debra can now be known as Dr with the letters, PhD after her name, she remains quite humble and reflective over the experience, “It gave me a chance to explore ideas I was interested in. It was challenging and I was sometimes out of my depth but I learnt along the way. What I had was excellent guidance as I explored a giant puzzle going over the material, adding layers through discussions of what was feasible and interpreting the data I collected.”

Debra is now Postgraduate Course Co-ordinator and will be delivering the new Masters Degree alongside Academic Dean, Leonie Walker, PhD (pictured right).

TCM News will be featuring Leonie in the next issue!

Master of Health Science Approved



Great news, NZQA has just approved our three year, part-time Master of Health Science (Chinese Medicine) Degree (Level 8) to commence in September. It has been designed to fit around your clinical practise.

Interested? Have a listen to Leonie and Debra discuss the aims of the course at www.vimeo.com/nzsatcm

More information on page 2.

DIRECTORS MESSAGE

2014 - Lets Celebrate!

By Karuna Olatunji and A.M. Olatunji

The passing years, the speed of time often is something we don't wish to acknowledge, but this is not the case for NZSATCM in 2014. We want everyone to know!

There is a lot to feel happy about. For starters the school celebrates its silver jubilee, or 25 years of having been in business. It bears little resemblance to the early days, aside from the original directors still in the driver's seat but certainly it can be credited with having taken on a life of its own.

Being a tertiary provider in amongst the big players isn't always plain

sailing, but for a small school NZSATCM packs a punch, boasting over 500 graduates, since its beginnings.

The success of the school must largely, be attributed to the dedication of its teachers and staff, who also have grown with the school, dedicated to students' education, while continuing their clinical practices and engaging in graduate and post graduate studies of their own. Debra Betts being conferred a PhD is a testament to this and being seen as the next milestone being celebrated by the school in 2014.

The question might be asked, what comes first: the chicken or the egg? Is it the solidifying place of acupuncture and TCM in primary healthcare that feeds a quest for TCM research, or has it been the increasing output of quality research that affirms this medicine's place alongside conventional medicine?

Whichever it is, but definitely worthy of celebration, NZSATCM will again lead



ITS GRADUATION TIME Graduation ceremonies took place in Wellington (shown) and Auckland earlier in the year.

the field, the first Master Degree of Chinese Medicine in New Zealand. This will commence September 2014. We are looking forward to the day when we profile research findings from these very students!

In whatever way you have been involved in the school, be it a patient in the student clinic, student, staff or supporter, we sincerely thank you and invite your ongoing participation in the exciting years to come!

WHAT WILL THE NEW MASTERS DEGREE LOOK LIKE?

NEW Master of Health Science (Chinese Medicine)

MHS801 Advanced research methods
First and second year part-time

MHS802 Contemporary perspectives in complementary and alternative medicine
First year part-time

MHS803 Small scale independent project
Second year part time

Choose one:

MHS804 Chinese medicine for musculoskeletal health
First and second year part-time

MHS805 Chinese medicine for women's health
First and second year part-time

MHS806 Chinese medicine for mental health
First and second year part-time

MHS807 Chinese herbal therapy
First and second year part-time

1ST INTAKE
SEPTEMBER 2014

We are accepting
expressions of
interest
NOW

Choose one:

MHS901 / MHS902 Dissertation
Third year part-time

MHS901 Research project

This is a supervised research project that provides learners with the experience of undertaking an in-depth independent project relevant to their own field of practice. The project may be directly related to clinical practice, or may explore clinical management or innovation associated with other relevant aspects of TCM practice.

or

MHS902 Literature-based research project

This is a supervised in-depth literature-based project where exploration of a selected research question is conducted through an extended review of the relevant literature. Formulation of conclusions and recommendations are prepared within a report to inform individual practice and that of the professional community.

AT A GLANCE

CONTINUE WITH YOUR CLINICAL PRACTICE

The part-time course has been designed with flexibility in mind with only one block course, saving on travel time and expense.

GAIN RESEARCH CONFIDENCE

Students are encouraged to critically discuss and engage with the latest health research and literature with access to journals.

MEET GUEST LECTURERS

Gain the knowledge and experience from leaders in acupuncture research, such as Dr Hugh McPherson, Charles Buck and Claudia Citkovitz - with more to come! Please visit www.acupuncture.ac.nz for updates.

ENGAGE IN YOUR OWN RESEARCH PROJECT

Develop the skills to complete a research project in an area of interest during your final year and contribute to the acupuncture profession.

SMALL MASTERS COHORT

A maximum of ten Masters students will be accepted for each intake.

PROFILE

Community Clinic “Sustained”

Californian born and bred, Elanita Korian comes from a family tradition where regular acupuncture treatments were “normal” and as children, they were treated by the same acupuncturist, till she was 17 years old.

Elanita had completed a degree in Psychology and Biology and was about to embark on dentistry training when she agreed to accompany a friend to an acupuncture school’s open day, but only on the condition, they followed it with a sandwich from her favourite restaurant, situated next door to the school. By the end of the presentation her friend had decided on another education pathway but Elanita was “hooked” and soon enrolled in the Pacific College of Acupuncture in San Diego.

Built into this school’s training, were clinical placements, both in-house, on a one to one basis, as well as a choice of external community clinics. Elanita experienced working in an HIV clinic and also a “senior clinic” held in a church Rec room along side a clinic run by USCD medical students.

On graduating from a Masters in TCM, and completing her California licensing requirements Elanita opened a small private practice in the beautiful town of Santa Cruz and continued to volunteer her time at an HIV clinic, as a way of getting involved in the community “I really enjoyed my student clinical experiences in the HIV clinic. They had interesting case studies, interesting personalities and nobody was doing anything like this (Acupuncture community clinics) in Santa Cruz so I went to the Santa Cruz Aids Projects and got involved there, volunteering, as an acupuncturist and assisting with referrals for the patients.”

June 2013 saw another move for Elanita when she accompanied her husband to New Zealand, for a one year posting, as a psychiatrist for Maori mental health. Along side the private practice she started here in Wellington she again approached groups that she had an interested in and was welcomed at Mansfield House, a recovery home for



REACHING OUT Elanita Korian in action at NZSATCM’s Community Clinic.
Photo credit: Stuart MacDonald

people with mental health issues and Body Positive, an HIV support group.

Body Positive was quick to welcome Elanita and her treatments. After 6 weeks of volunteering and a written proposal including recent related research outcomes and a bundle of enthusiasm Elanita was able to secure committed funding for the acupuncture.

“The great thing about NZ is it is a blank slate- ripe for picking. Once you find a community you are interested in find out what works to serve them”

This definitely has been the case for the community clinic offered through NZSATCM. Once a week Elanita supervises senior students treating at Arohata Prison and again for the recently opened community clinic at the school. Operating as a “no appointment” inclusive environment both Elanita and fellow practitioner, Peter Larking are kept busy from 10am to 2pm with a steady stream of

regulars.

“This has been awesome, better than I could have hoped. What is so cool about this community clinic at the school is that we are seeing a huge range of people from refugees, seniors, immigrants, students, staff and their friends- it’s really a beautiful thing!”

In a short space of a year Elanita has raised the possibilities for community clinics in Wellington. Her drive and enthusiasm will be missed when she leaves for the States next month, when their contracted time in New Zealand comes to an end.

Sustained Community Acupuncture Clinic

Established February 2014 by
Peter Larking and Elanita Korian

For more information please visit
[www.acupuncture.ac.nz/
index.php/clinics/community-clinic](http://www.acupuncture.ac.nz/index.php/clinics/community-clinic)

RESEARCH

Acupuncture for mental health

By Kate Roberts

Mental health is a considerable public health concern in New Zealand with 46.6% of the total population predicted to be affected by a mental health disorder at some point in their life with 20.7% having been affected in the last 12 months (1). This is consistent with worldwide findings with a WHO study of global burden of disease finding the mental health disorders constitute five of the ten leading causes of disability. (2)

There is currently an identified unmet need for the treatment of people experiencing mental health disorders in New Zealand with a maximum of 58% of sufferers of serious disorders contacting the healthcare sector for treatment. Up to 57% of sufferers of mental health conditions go undiagnosed each year. The burden of mental health impacts on four main domains: home responsibilities, work or study, close relationships and social life. (1)

There is growing interest in non-pharmacological treatments of mental health conditions with various studies reporting between 6.8-10% of



Kate Roberts (pictured) graduated with her Masters in Traditional Chinese Medicine from the University of Technology, Sydney Australia in 2001. She is currently undertaking Post Graduate papers in Mental Health at the School of Psychological Medicine at Otago University.

Since moving to New Zealand in 2002 Kate has been working at the New Zealand School of Acupuncture as a tutor and has taught both clinical and theory subjects for first through to fourth year students.

Kate runs a professional teaching clinic in Central Wellington and her Island Bay clinic is due to open in late 2014.

For more information or to make a booking please contact Kate 027 672 7244, kate@nzsao.com or <http://www.ezybook.co.nz/pages/bendybuddhaacupuncture>

mental health consumers selecting complementary theories as either their first choice or as an adjunct to standard care. (4)(3) In Wang's study of CAM therapists, acupuncturists reported that up to 10% of clients reported with mental health concerns as their primary complaint. (3)

Studies and reviews looking at acupuncture alone or in comparison to western medication show some positive findings. Pilkington in her 2007 review of acupuncture for anxiety disorders noted there were positive findings for acupuncture in the treatment of generalized anxiety disorder or anxiety neurosis. (5)

Another interesting study investigating laser acupuncture in a primary care setting for the treatment of mild to moderate depression found laser acupuncture was significantly superior to sham acupuncture at two measurement points. (6)

While the evidence is still emerging, it is definitely worth working towards an integrated approach to mental health in primary care.

1. Oakly Browne MA, Wells JE SK (eds). Te Rau Hinengaro : The New Zealand Mental Health Survey. 2006.

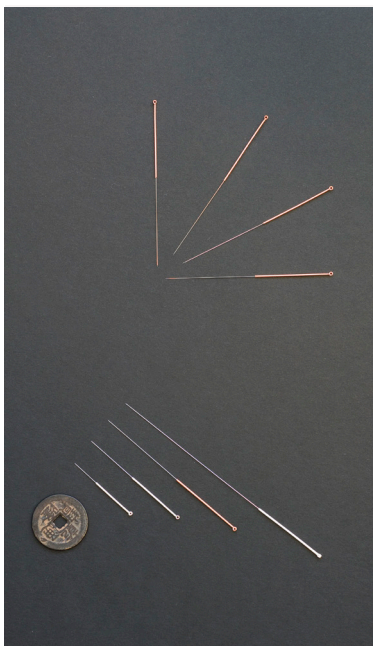
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3. Simon GE, Cherkin DC, Sherman KJ, Eisenberg DM, Deyo RA, Davis RB. Mental health visits to complementary and alternative medicine providers. General hospital psychiatry [Internet]. 2004 [cited 2013 Apr 10];26(3):171-7. Available from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15121344>

4. Wang PS, Lane M, Olfson M, Pincus HA, Wells KB, Kessler RC. Twelve-month use of mental health services in the United States: results from the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. Archives of general psychiatry [Internet]. American Medical Association; 2005 Jun 1 [cited 2013 Jun 17];62(6):629-40. Available from: <http://archpsyc.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=208673>

5. Pilkington K, Kirkwood G, Rampes H, Cummings M, Richardson J. Acupuncture for anxiety and anxiety disorders - a systematic literature review. 2007;25:1-10.

6. Quah-Smith JI, Tang WM, Russell J. Laser acupuncture for mild to moderate depression in a primary care setting--a randomised controlled trial. Acupuncture in medicine : journal of the British Medical Acupuncture Society [Internet]. 2005 Sep;23(3):103-11. Available from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16259308>



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