



Western Veterinary Acupuncture and Chronic Pain Management – Course syllabus - Modules 1 – 12

Modules 1-4 Foundation Course

Aims:

- To provide a grounding in veterinary acupuncture and the ability to start using acupuncture in practice.

Outcomes:

At the end of this module participants should be able to:

- State the origins of acupuncture, as well as some of the controversies and define some common areas of agreement between the “Western” and the traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) approach
 - Understand the neurophysiological mechanisms involved in the effects of acupuncture
 - Have palpated myofascial trigger points, understood their aetiology as currently understood and their relevance to acupuncture treatments.
 - Define the “Western” approach to acupuncture
 - Be able to apply the principles and safe practice of Western veterinary acupuncture
 - Be able to construct treatment plans, including needling sites and techniques for a variety of different conditions.
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Module 1 – foundation course

Introduction to the course

- Welcome and practical considerations
- Overview of acupuncture, its history, some TCM nomenclature and the introduction of acupuncture to the West
- Safety Brief for needling of fellow participants

Needling practice:

- Experience needling at Li4
- Points: neck, shoulder and arm
- Point finding in the veterinary species

Introduction to trigger points

- Trigger point theory in man and animals
- Finding trigger points

Pain recognition in animals

Principles of point selection

Safety quiz

Point selection exercises – neck, shoulder and forelimb conditions

Module 2 – foundation course

Points in the lower back and leg

- Point finding in the veterinary species
- Needling practice

Neurophysiology of acupuncture

- Revision of pain pathways and the nervous system
- Explaining the principles of point selection

Point location dogs and horses

- Practical handling and location
- Further principles of point selection
- Point selection exercises – lumbar, lumbosacral region and hindlimb
- Clinical discussion

Clinical aspects of treatment

- Which patients to treat
- Which conditions to treat
- Contraindications/cautions
- Needles and needling techniques
- Frequency and timing of treatments

Safety and side effects

- Safety of acupuncture
- Serious adverse side effects
- Minor adverse side effects
- Relevance to the veterinary species

Planning patient treatments and presentations

Module 3 – foundation course

Face and abdomen points

- Point location
- Practice needling
- Use of different needling techniques
- Discussion of relevance of face points in animals

Segmental acupuncture

- The use of acupuncture for functional non pathological disorders
- Paraspinal needling – theory and practice
- Other approaches to segmental needling
- Treatment of visceral conditions: point selection exercises

Case demonstrations

- Case demonstrations with discussion
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Module 4 – foundation course

Introduction to electroacupuncture

- Electroacupuncture theory
- Electroacupuncture experience

Dermatology

- Theory and research of acupuncture in dermatology
- Consideration of dermatological conditions

- Point selection exercises

Research and audit

- Challenges of acupuncture research
- Examples of acupuncture research
- Questions to ask and pitfalls to avoid

Case studies

- Devising treatment plans for more complex cases

Running a veterinary acupuncture clinic

- Safety
- Practical considerations
- Timings and pricing

Quiz

- Opportunity for revision and reflection

Case presentations

Final forum

Electroacupuncture (EA)

Module 5

Aims:

- To expand on the introductory ideas of electroacupuncture and to allow participants to introduce EA into their practice

Outcomes:

By the end of this module the participants should be able to:

- State how electricity has been used historically in medicine
- Define the general principles of electroacupuncture
- Understand the electroacupuncture device with which they are supplied
- State when and why they will use electroacupuncture
- Understand safety considerations and potential side effects of electroacupuncture
- Be able to apply their theory of electroacupuncture to a number of conditions

Introduction to the use of electricity in medicine

Electroacupuncture - theory

- Safety
- Contraindications and cautions
- Principles
- Effects
- Indications

Electroacupuncture- practical

- Familiarization with the EA device
- Use of the device
- Use in specific conditions

Review, refresh and update

Module 6

Aims

This module aims to refresh and revise the major concepts covered in modules 1-5 before moving on to update participants in current research and practice.

Outcomes

By the end of this module participants should:

- Feel comfortable and confident with all the major concepts of modules 1-5
- Have covered issues arising from using acupuncture in practice
- Be aware of some of the new pieces of research into musculoskeletal pain and their significance

Review and refresh

- Issues arising from practice
- Revision of points and anatomy
- Revision of safety

Update on acupuncture for musculoskeletal conditions

- Current research – human
- Current research – animal
- Specific conditions – hip, stifle, hock
- Specific conditions- shoulder, elbow, carpus

Case presentations and case discussions

Treatment of pain / understanding of pain for the acupuncturist

Module 7

Aims

- To revise and review understanding of acute pain
- To revise and review chronic pain as a distinct phenomenon from acute pain
- To classify chronic and acute pain and distinguish between the sensation of pain and the emotion of suffering

Outcomes:

By the end of this module participants should be able to:

- State how acute pain and chronic pain are different from each other
- Understand the physiology and experience of pain
- Explain how pain can manifest in different ways, including as behavioural problems
- Explain the various causes and classifications of pain and the clues that help to distinguish them from each other

Introduction to pain

- Acute pain, definitions of pain, physiology of pain
- How chronic pain compares with acute pain
- Neurophysiology of acute and chronic pain
- Classifications of pain
- Distinction between pain and suffering

How pain manifests as a behavioural problem:

- Aggression
- Anxiety and fear
- Compulsive disorders
- Miscellaneous/bizarre

Causes of pain in the cat and dog

- Musculoskeletal
- Neurological
- Visceral
- Oral/aural/dermatological

Classifications of pain

- Nociceptive
 - Neuropathic
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Module 8

Aims:

- To explain the current status of assessment techniques
- To explain some approaches using osteoarthritis as an example

Outcomes:

By the end of this module participants should be able to:

- Explain why assessing pain is not straightforward
- Apply the knowledge that behavioural changes are part of any assessment of pain
- Explain and apply some of the techniques used to assess pain and suffering
- Apply some approaches to osteoarthritis

Assessment of pain:

- Current status of assessment techniques
- Triangulation
- Palpation techniques
- Gait/ muscular development/movement/posture

Treatment of osteoarthritis as an example of chronic pain

- Osteoarthritis – the disease
- Sources of pain in OA
- An ABCDE approach to OA and where acupuncture fits into this.

Module 9

Aims:

- To explain the practical approach to examination and how to base a treatment on the examination and history of the patient

Outcomes:

By the end of this module participants should be able to:

- Understand that treatment plans cannot be started without examination of the patient
- Explain the confounding factors in assessment of pain problems
- Understand how acupuncture can be applied to patients with central sensitization
- Explain the limitations of acupuncture with anxious/aroused animals
- Appreciate the current research in terms of sedation effects on acupuncture

Examination of a patient

- Superficial examination
- Effects of arousal and anxiety
- Forelimb lameness – hindlimb problem?
- Clues from physical difficulties
- Allodynia and hyperalgesia
- Trigger points – relevance and interpretation

Approach to patients:

- Reducing anxiety
- Reducing central sensitization
- Good responders vs sensitive patients
- Sedation – when to use and what to use

Practical case examples

Module 10

When acupuncture is not enough – what comes next?

Aims:

- To demonstrate that acupuncture is not always enough and that multimodal analgesia and other techniques may need to be employed

Outcomes:

By the end of this module participants should be able to:

- Appreciate the limitations of acupuncture
- Explain how different pharmacological treatments work
- Appreciate how to choose between treatments
- Define the challenges of assessing physical therapies
- Be clear about how to devise treatment plans

When acupuncture is not enough

- Outcome measures
- When acupuncture is not enough- what to do next

Pharmacological interventions

- Licensed medications – indications/safety/side effects
- Unlicensed medications- indications/safety/side effects

Physical therapies

- Challenges of assessing physical therapies
- Physiotherapy/hydrotherapy
- Other physical therapies

Other complementary and alternative therapies (CAM)

- Challenges of assessing CAM
- Examples and results of studies

Discussion and forum

Beyond musculoskeletal pain

Aims:

- To demonstrate and revise the challenges of acupuncture research and to provide updates on the use of acupuncture in a range of clinical conditions

Outcomes

By the end of these modules participants should be able to:

- Appreciate the challenges of acupuncture research and be able to assess published research papers
- Understand the current research on a number of clinical conditions and how this applies practically to the clinical situation

Module 11

Challenges of acupuncture research

- “Placebo” and “nocebo” effects
- Examples of studies
- Practice reading, reviewing and evaluating acupuncture research papers

Update on dermatology and practical applications

- Case examples/studies

Update on psychology and practical applications

Update on visceral conditions and practical applications

- Case examples/studies
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Module 12

Update on acupuncture for ocular problems

Update on acupuncture for neurological conditions and practical applications

Miscellaneous syndromes

Revision of techniques and conditions treated

Case studies and presentations

Final forum