



PRACTICE STATEMENT

Practice Statement
Number: 4.6

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Issued:

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TOPIC: ACUPUNCTURE AND INTRAMUSCULAR DRY NEEDLE THERAPY

Purpose of Policy

To outline the use of acupuncture and intramuscular dry needle therapy within physiotherapy practice.

Definitions

Acupuncture: the stimulation of certain points on the body by the insertion of needles to prevent or modify the perception of pain, and/or alter physiological functions. It involves inserting acupuncture needles at certain body points based on anatomical location, Traditional Chinese Medicine and/or neurophysiological principles.

Intramuscular Dry Needle Therapy: the stimulation of contracted muscle tissue by the insertion of acupuncture needles to achieve a therapeutic effect based on neurophysiological principles.

Policy Statement

Physiotherapists will use professional judgment, act within their level of competency and stay within the scope of physiotherapy practice when using acupuncture and intramuscular dry needle therapy.

Physiotherapists' education provides a professional foundation whereby the use of needles in acupuncture and intramuscular dry needle therapy can legitimately be incorporated into the practice of physiotherapy.

The use of acupuncture needles is within the scope of physiotherapy practice when using acupuncture and intramuscular dry needle therapy.

Physiotherapists planning to incorporate acupuncture and/or intramuscular dry needle therapy into their physiotherapy practice must successfully complete a training program that meets criteria set by CPM (Regulations P65-M.R. 204/2001, *Physiotherapists Act – Regulations*).

Only physiotherapists who have met the requirements of CPM to practice acupuncture and intramuscular dry needle therapy may do so within the scope of physiotherapy practice.

A Practice Statement is a formal position of the College with which members shall comply.

CPM will maintain a list of physiotherapists who have met the criteria to practice acupuncture. Physiotherapists must submit evidence to CPM of having met the criteria in order to have his/her name entered on the list.

Standards of Practice

- Physiotherapists adhere to universal precautions. It is recommended that physiotherapists be vaccinated against Hepatitis B.
- Single-use, sterile, disposable needles only are recommended.
- A physiotherapist trained in acupuncture must be readily available to individuals receiving acupuncture and intramuscular dry needle therapy throughout the treatment.
- The needles must be removed by a physiotherapist trained in acupuncture and/or intramuscular dry needle therapy. It is recommended that the physiotherapist who inserts the needles is the physiotherapist who removes the needles.
- The needle shaft must be maintained in a sterile state throughout the treatment, from before insertion to needle withdrawal. If the needle shaft is contaminated, by the practitioner's hand or by another non-sterile object or surface, the needle must not be used.
- Sterile guide tubes like needles are for single patient use only and must be disposed of immediately after treatment. In the case of intramuscular dry needle therapy, where a reusable plunger type applicator may be used, the applicator must be properly sterilized, in an autoclave, after use with each patient.
- To prevent needle stick injuries, needles are not to be recapped, purposely bent or broken, removed from disposable syringes or otherwise manipulated by hand.
- Used needles must be placed in puncture-resistant sharps containers with lids and disposed of by a company that handles waste from medical sources.

Documentation

(Refer to Practice Statement 4.17 Record Keeping)

Treatment must be described in sufficient detail to be reproducible. Written informed consent is highly recommended. Clinical treatment records and billing records for acupuncture and intramuscular dry needles therapy treatment outside of physiotherapy practice must be separate and apart from the records of physiotherapy.

Entry-level Educational Qualifications for Acupuncture

Education programs that meet the approval of CPM will have the following components:

Curriculum

- a) minimum of 100 hours of instruction including theoretical and practical components;
- b) course content must include, but is not limited to:
 - theoretical basis of acupuncture
 - safety
 - infection control /contraindications/precautions
 - point location and relevant anatomy needling technique
 - application of acupuncture to physiotherapy practice

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Examination

- a) A formal written and practical examination after the 100 hours must be utilized to determine level of competency.
- b) An external examiner (not involved in teaching the course) must be involved in the examination process, either alone or in conjunction with other instructors/examiners. The external examiner must meet the same qualification requirements as outlined for the principle instructor.

Principle Instructor

The principle instructor must meet the following requirements:

- a) Hold certification in a CPM approved acupuncture program
- b) Have a minimum of five (5) years acupuncture experience following certification.
- c) Have demonstrated ongoing continuing education and professional development in the field.
- d) Have previous experience participating in a Council-approved acupuncture course, for example as a lab demonstrator or teaching assistant.

The following programs of training have been reviewed and meet the above criteria:

1. The Acupuncture Foundation of Canada Institute (AFCI) Program Certification—Level 1, including part 1, part 2A and 3A.
2. Manitoba Acupuncture for Physiotherapists: The Art and The Science.
3. The Certificate Program in Medical Acupuncture, Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta.

Any new acupuncture training programs would be assessed and approved based on the above criteria.

Process for recognition:

Following successful completion of a Council approved acupuncture course and examination process, the physiotherapist must provide written evidence to the Registrar that he/she has passed the course. Once this confirmation is received, the physiotherapist may commence practicing acupuncture on patients/clients. The physiotherapist's name will be added to the CPM list of members who are qualified to practice acupuncture.

Continuing Competence:

This standard represents a minimum entry to practice acupuncture as a physiotherapist in Manitoba. All trained physiotherapists shall endeavor to continue their education of acupuncture theory and practice via course work, conference attendance and review of the literature.

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Entry-level Educational Qualifications for Intramuscular Dry Needle Therapy

Criteria:

The physiotherapist must have completed the entry-level educational qualifications to practice acupuncture in Manitoba. Intramuscular Dry Needle Therapy is considered beyond entry-level practice. The physiotherapist must have participated in a formal training program.

Addendum

Physiotherapists may have acupuncture and intramuscular dry needle therapy training different from CPM approved requirements. For practice and billing purposes, these physiotherapists cannot practice acupuncture and intramuscular dry needle therapy as a physiotherapist. It is the physiotherapist's responsibility to clearly indicate to the public when acupuncture and intramuscular dry needle therapy is being provided outside of physiotherapy practice.

References

- College of Physical Therapists of Alberta Position Statement "Use of Needles" January 2005.*
- College of Physical Therapists of Alberta Policy Statement "Use of Needles as a Physical Therapy Intervention" June 2001.*
- College of Physical Therapists of British Columbia Policies and Procedures "Approval of Acupuncture Qualification" July 9, 2000.*
- College of Physical Therapists of British Columbia Clinical Practice Statement re: Acupuncture and Intramuscular Stimulation September 2002.*
- College of Physiotherapists of Ontario Position Statement "The Practice of Acupuncture by Physiotherapists" 1998.*
- Nova Scotia College of Physiotherapists Policies and Procedures "Acupuncture" 1997.*
- Nova Scotia College of Physiotherapists Practice Guidelines Topic: Use of Acupuncture August 1997.*
- Prince Edward Island College of Physiotherapist Policy Statement on Acupuncture.*
- Quebec Official Publisher 2002 Bill 90 An Act To Amend the Professional Code and other legislative provisions as regards to the health sector.*