



POLICIES

ISSUED: July 2009

REPLACES: April 2008

TOPIC: **Acupuncture and Intramuscular Stimulation (IMS) or Dry Needle Therapy**

Definitions:

In this policy Acupuncture means the stimulation of certain points of the body by the insertion of needles to prevent or modify the perception of pain, and/or alter physiological functions including pain control in the treatment of certain diseases or dysfunction of the body. Acupuncture involves inserting acupuncture needles at certain body points based on anatomical location, Traditional Chinese Medicine and/or physiological principles.

Acupuncture point – may be a traditional point, an anatomical point such as a motor point, or what is called an extra point that is not located on a traditional acupuncture meridian.

Intramuscular Stimulation (IMS) or Dry Needle Therapy is defined as the stimulation of contracted muscle tissue by the insertion of acupuncture needles to achieve a therapeutic effect based on neurophysiological principles. It is a total system that can be used for the diagnosis and treatment of myofascial pain syndromes.

Policy Statement:

Acupuncture is a treatment used by physiotherapists. It is a part of our Scope of Practice as set in the Physiotherapy Act of Nova Scotia. Physiotherapists' education provides a professional foundation whereby the use of needles in acupuncture and IMS can be legitimately incorporated into the practice of physiotherapy. Physiotherapists will use professional judgment, act within their level of competency and stay within the scope of physiotherapy practice when using acupuncture and IMS.

Expectation:

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

Physiotherapists practicing acupuncture must take part in a program that meets the specific criteria and objectives which are listed below. The physiotherapist shall only practice at the level at which they have successfully completed the testing and in an approved course.

PROGRAM CRITERIA

1. The acupuncture program includes theoretical and practical instruction.
2. The program provides participants with the knowledge base and clinical skills necessary to apply acupuncture techniques safely and competently.
3. The program evaluates the physiotherapist's competency with the points demonstrated and used during the course.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

At the completion of the program, participants should be able to:

1. Integrate the scientific and neurophysiological principles related to the application of acupuncture in the treatment of pain and other health disorders.
2. Discuss acupuncture treatment principles and justify the approach chosen.
3. Locate and use acupuncture points using the method taught on the courses.
4. Describe the contraindications, precautions, and complications of acupuncture and the methods for dealing with these emergency situations should they arise.
5. Demonstrate the clinical applications of methods and the techniques used in acupuncture.
6. Demonstrate needle insertion procedures on acupuncture points.
7. Evaluate methods of pain control including acupuncture, and measure the outcome of the treatment applied.

Recommended courses:

Courses which meet the criteria and the objectives set out in this policy include, but are not limited to:

Acupuncture Foundation of Canada Institute

University of Alberta, Faculty Extension program in Medical Acupuncture

IMS course offered through the Institute for the Study and Treatment of Pain or equivalent

Other courses have equivalent academic training or combination of academic training and practical work experience may be determined to be satisfactory by the Nova Scotia College of Physiotherapy Board of Directors.

Additional Resources:

Public Health Agency of Canada – www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/dpg_e.html#infection