



PRACTICE GUIDELINES

ISSUED: July 2009

REPLACES: April 2008

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

Practice Standards for the practice of Acupuncture and IntraMuscular Stimulation (IMS) or Dry Needle Therapy

- Physiotherapists adhere to the general universal precautions. It is recommended that the physiotherapist be vaccinated against Hepatitis B.
- Single use, sterile, disposable acupuncture needles shall be used.
- Sterile guide tubes, like the needles, are for single patient use only. They must be disposed of immediately after treatment. In the case of IMS, where a reusable plunger type applicator may be used, the applicator must be properly sterilized after use with each patient.
- A physiotherapist trained in acupuncture must be readily available to the individual receiving acupuncture and IMS throughout the treatment.
- The acupuncture needles must be removed by a physiotherapist. The physiotherapist is responsible for the overall treatment including the removal of the needles.
- The acupuncture needle shaft must be maintained in a clean state throughout the treatment, from before insertion to needle withdrawal. If the needle shaft is contaminated, by the therapist's hand or by another non-sterile object or surface, the needle must not be used,
- Used needles must be placed in puncture-resistant sharps containers with lids and disposed of by a company that handles waste from medical sources. A re-usable plunger type applicator must be sterilized after use with each patient. Follow Public Health Agency Guidelines for method to use.
- The patient having acupuncture needs to have the skin prepared with an antibacterial solution containing 2% chlorhexidine with 4% isopropyl alcohol (eg. Stanhexidine). This was recommended by the Acupuncture Foundation of Canada in 2005. (See attached Background article)

Documentation:

- Physiotherapists follow the clinical practice guidelines already established by the College. Written informed consent is highly recommended. (See appendix A for a sample document).