

About Integrative Medicine

A Guide to Self-Care and Support | Fall 2023

CHIEF'S NOTE



Jun Mao, MD, MSCE
Chief, Integrative Medicine Service

This fall, I encourage you to explore the many opportunities we offer to include mind-body therapies in your self-care. It is important to keep moving, which you can do seven days a week through Integrative Medicine at Home. Our research studies are actively enrolling in areas including acupuncture (learn more in this issue), yoga, and mindfulness. And we offer individual massage and acupuncture sessions to help you manage symptoms and side effects from cancer treatment. Call 646-449-1010 to schedule your visit.

In this issue, we meet our wonderful new fitness instructors, and learn about the role of research in advancing acupuncture clinical care from MSK lead acupuncturist Matthew Weitzman. We also share information about our ongoing study on acupuncture for treatment of chemotherapy-induced peripheral neuropathy and explore the evidence for valerian. As always, I invite you to join our online fall series and workshops.

Be well,
Jun

Investigating the Role of Acupuncture for Neuropathy

By Christina Seluzicki, MBE

People who receive chemotherapy as a part of their cancer treatment may experience chemotherapy-induced peripheral neuropathy or CIPN. This condition is characterized by numbness and/or nerve pain in their arms and legs and is challenging to manage. An ongoing MSK research study, Acupuncture for Chemotherapy-induced Peripheral Neuropathy Treatment (ACT), funded by the National Cancer Institute, is evaluating the role of electroacupuncture versus placebo electroacupuncture for the treatment of CIPN.



If you have a history of cancer, are currently cancer-free, and completed chemotherapy three or more months ago but are still experiencing moderate to severe nerve pain, you may be eligible to participate. Those

who enroll in the study will be randomly assigned to one of two groups: the electroacupuncture group or the placebo acupuncture group. Electroacupuncture is a medical technique that involves insertion of very thin needles with a small amount of electricity into acupoints on the body. In research studies, electroacupuncture has been found to be helpful for treating pain. Placebo acupuncture is similar to real acupuncture but uses different needle techniques and sites on the body.

Dr. Jun J. Mao, chief of IMS and the site principal investigator for ACT says, “Many people who have had chemotherapy experience tingling, numbness, and pain in their hands and feet, known as CIPN. This troubling symptom can reduce both quality of life and functions. Routine aspects of daily living become difficult, from buttoning a shirt to walking down the street. In this study, we aim to bring hope and solutions to our patients by demonstrating the effectiveness of electroacupuncture in reducing pain and improving quality of life.”

If you are interested in learning more about [the ACT study](#), please contact our study staff at [646-449-1033](tel:646-449-1033).



The Impact of Research on Acupuncture Clinical Care



By Matthew Weitzman, MS, LAc, Dipl OM (NCCAOM)

Matthew Weitzman is a licensed acupuncturist and the lead acupuncturist at MSK, where he has provided care since 2012. Matthew works with patients at all stages of the cancer continuum and is involved in clinical research and educational programs to advance the field of oncology acupuncture.

How do research studies impact the clinical practice of acupuncture?

Acupuncture is a form of treatment in Traditional Chinese Medicine that is performed by applying very thin needles to certain points on your body. Clinical research – research done in people – has helped us understand how acupuncture can

help patients throughout their cancer journey and which patients it can help the most. This past year saw a major development in oncology acupuncture. The American Society for Clinical Oncology (ASCO), the leading organization for professionals who work in cancer care, included acupuncture in their guidelines. For the first time, they recommended acupuncture treatment for patients experiencing joint pain as a result of hormonal therapy. Such a recommendation is only possible due to high quality clinical research evidence.

What acupuncture research is being conducted at MSK?

We have several studies at different stages right now. CHOICE, a recently completed study funded by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), looked at acupuncture and a form of psychotherapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, for the treatment of insomnia. Our researchers found that patients suffering from insomnia who also had pain as a barrier to sleep, may benefit more from acupuncture than those patients whose only complaint is

insomnia. Additionally, our PCORI-funded IMPACT trial recently completed enrollment. In it, we compared acupuncture and massage for pain in patients with advanced cancer, with results forthcoming soon. Currently, our National Cancer Institute-funded ACT trial is exploring the use of acupuncture to reduce pain related to a condition called chemotherapy-induced peripheral neuropathy.

What are some future research opportunities in acupuncture?

An exciting frontier in medicine is looking at specific DNA markers to see if people with certain genes respond better to different types of therapies. This work is being done to match patients to an optimal chemotherapy or biotherapy regimen, but early research indicates that it can also help us determine who will best respond to acupuncture. It is all very exciting – and being done right here at MSK!

To learn more about acupuncture and other therapies available at MSK, call 646-449-1010 or visit [our website](#).

Integrative Medicine at Home Membership Program



Start your membership online today! Visit msk.org/athome.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Monthly membership: **\$25**
 Three-month membership: **\$60**
 Six-month membership: **\$120** (includes one free workshop)

AS A MEMBER, YOU CAN ENJOY:

- ▶ Connecting with your cancer community
- ▶ Staying active, with guidance from MSK experts
- ▶ Learning new skills to increase resilience and decrease stress
- ▶ Unlimited access to daily fitness and mind-body classes
- ▶ Dedicated website with on-demand videos to help keep you moving on your schedule
- ▶ Discounts on our small group workshops and mind-body series

Meet our New Fitness Instructors

By Christina Seluzicki, MBE

This summer, the Integrative Medicine Service (IMS) was delighted to welcome four new fitness instructors to our team. If you are a member of Integrative Medicine at Home, our program of online mind-body and fitness classes, you may have met several of them already. You can also look for opportunities to work out with them in future workshops, series, and through our ever-expanding library of on-demand videos for members.



Kareem Collins is a group exercise instructor and personal trainer who specializes in strength training, balance, stability, and coordination exercises with a focus on seniors and people with Parkinson's disease. Kareem leads Mobility Aerobics Strength Training, a chair-centered fitness class at noon on Mondays.



Gillian Johnson is a certified strength and conditioning specialist, certified nutrition coach, and former professional volleyball player. She specializes in injury prevention and rehabilitation with experience teaching individual and group fitness sessions. Gillian is working to expand our library of on-demand fitness videos.



Janice Johson is a certified personal trainer, health coach, kickboxing trainer, and group fitness instructor. She is also a U.S. Army master fitness instructor and a law enforcement general instructor/fitness instructor. She brings higher intensity workouts to to to IMAH with Cardio-Kickboxing Fusion on Tuesday mornings and Endurance Interval Training on Saturday mornings.



Christine Trastevere is a personal trainer, fitness instructor and cancer survivor who specializes in senior fitness. She is also a member of the Empire Dragons NYC. A member of IMAH since the beginning, Christine is now teaching Fitness for Everyone and Fitness for Stronger Bones classes on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings. Her tagline is "Let's move together!"

Visit mskcc.org/AtHome or call 646-449-1010 to become a member of Integrative Medicine at Home.



Valerian

By Jyothirmai Gubili, MS

Valerian is a perennial flowering plant with a long medicinal history. Its dried root is used in supplemental forms to treat nervousness, trembling, sleeplessness, and headaches. Valerian is also used to relieve gastrointestinal spasms, to treat epilepsy, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and to flavor foods and drinks such as root beer.

Studies conducted in animals have shown that valerian may lower high blood pressure, relieve spasms, and reduce anxiety and depression. Limited data from studies conducted



in humans suggest that valerian is effective against anxiety and may benefit those with insomnia.

Valerian supplements have been associated with headache, gastrointestinal complaints, impaired alertness, dizziness, heart palpitations, and cases of liver and pancreatic toxicity. They can also worsen the side effects of

medications such as anticonvulsants, which are used to treat seizures, and benzodiazepines, often used to treat anxiety, insomnia, and seizures.

For more details about valerian, see our [full write-up](#) on the About Herbs website or download the About Herbs app (available for Android via [Google Play](#) and iOS via the [App Store](#)SM).



Upcoming Online Programming

Register online today to join one of these upcoming virtual wellness programs. Scan the QR code with your phone to sign up online or call [646-449-1010](tel:646-449-1010).



Workshops: \$20 members; \$25 non-members **Regular series:** \$100 members; \$125 non-members
Mini meditation series: \$80 members; \$105 non-members

OCTOBER

- › **Series:** Joy of Dance
Tuesdays, October 3 to November 7
6:15 p.m. to 7:15 p.m.
- › **Workshop:** Massage and Movement for Lymphatic Flow
Tuesday, October 10
1:00 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.
- › **Workshop:** Relax Yourself to Sleep
Monday, October 16
12:30 p.m. to 1:45 p.m.

NOVEMBER

- › **Workshop:** Ayurveda and Yoga: Winter Edition
Thursday, November 9
6:00 p.m. to 7:15 p.m.
- › **Workshop:** Martial Arts for Strength & Balance
Thursday, November 16
7:00 p.m. to 8:15 p.m.
- › **Mini Series:** Embracing the Holidays Through Mindfulness
Sundays, November 26 to December 17
6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

DECEMBER

- › **Workshop:** Feeling Good! Reclaiming Your Body Using Yoga and Dance
Sunday, December 10
11:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.
- › **Workshop:** Acupuncture for Chemotherapy-induced Peripheral Neuropathy
Wednesday, December 13
6:00 p.m. to 7:15 p.m.