



WELCOME TO IEP

an introduction to our clinic from the Director, Subhuti Dharmananda, Ph.D.

The Purpose, Method, and Goal of the Clinic

IEP is a medical specialties clinic aimed at answering the question: can traditional Chinese medicine—and related approaches—make a significant impact on people with certain medical problems? The clinical process we utilize works through a *partnership* between practitioners and patients: implementing a regimen that engages the patient's daily habits and the practitioners' training in natural therapies while incorporating along with these all that modern medicine has to offer through the patient's physician. The goal of this partnership is to help restore the integrity of the body, mind, and spirit with the goal that the person who comes to IEP can eventually take on essential natural health care approaches on their own—exercise, good nutrition, spiritual pursuits, and healthful daily habits—whether or not the disease condition presented initially has been resolved.

Our Medical Specialties

IEP is not just another clinic offering traditional Chinese medicine to anyone seeking that kind of health care; rather, it is a *project* that evaluates the impact of these therapies in certain medical areas. The principal concerns addressed at IEP are those involving the immune system, from which the name of the clinic was derived; examples are: immune suppression associated with receiving cancer therapies; certain autoimmune diseases; and HIV infection. In addition, because of the strong reputation for acupuncture in the treatment of pain syndromes, some cases of severe or chronic pain are also subject of our work; and, because of special projects on diabetes and hepatitis C that were pursued in the past, some patients with these conditions are also included in the program. People with many other disorders seek out help through traditional Chinese medicine, and we direct those individuals to other clinics, especially to the private practices of the practitioners who work at IEP. The medical specialties we have chosen have certain characteristics: they involve a difficult treatment area where Chinese medicine has been suggested as being of particular help, and the specialty area has been one of interest to other practitioners of Chinese medicine. At any given time, there are only about five medical specialties being addressed at the clinic, and these may vary over the years, with some eventually deleted and others added. For the most part, the IEP clinic is for persons who have not previously utilized Chinese medicine or have used it only minimally; the clinic is not intended as a place to transfer care already being received from other Chinese medicine or naturopathic clinics.

What IEP Provides

IEP primarily offers acupuncture and Chinese herb formulas administered by well-qualified practitioners. The aim is not just treatment, but also to preserve and to further advance the best aspects of the traditional Chinese system of health care. This medical approach of ancient origin has been integrated with modern medicine during the past fifty years. IEP specifically steers away from alternative medicine as a whole; this clinic is about a traditional medical system, not individual remedies claimed to have some effect as is characteristic of alternative medicine. The program of therapy at IEP directs patients to work with their medical doctors to utilize the best of modern medicine; it encourages patients to rely on a nutritious diet (not an extreme diet); patients are strongly advised to pursue physical therapy through exercises. During a visit to IEP, a very brief report of current symptoms is obtained, and this information is utilized to determine the acupuncture protocol for that visit, as well as to aid consideration of any possible adjustments in a regimen of herbs. In addition to acupuncture and Chinese herbs, IEP practitioners may recommend a few other types of supplements, such as vitamins or enzymes, and patients are able to receive a type of massage therapy that is related to acupuncture concepts, called Zen Shiatsu (usually twice per month).

What Patients Do

IEP patients are not passive recipients of treatment we provide; IEP is not a place where one simply “gets needled and picks up supplements.” Rather, the activities of the clinic are part of a broader program of health care that requires active participation of the patients. By choosing to participate in a traditional Chinese medicine program at IEP, the full nature of Chinese medicine is brought into the picture. First and foremost, traditional Chinese medicine is a system of *self-healing* involving, among other things: good daily habits with seasonal adjustments; calming the mind; developing the strength and gracefulness of the body; pursuing a spiritual path; and integrating the individual’s life with the greater society.

In order for this system of medicine to have an impact, it is important that patients pursue a more natural life style than is common to our modern world. People involved in natural and traditional medicine often have many different concepts about what is natural and even what constitutes doing something healthful. The clinic Director has established this clinic to promote approaches that he has observed through more than 30 years of work in the field. In the “natural” setting—as in the pre-industrial setting—people do physical labor, eat home-cooked meals, and are busy taking care of the needs of their families and neighbors. In the modern setting, people tend to be sedentary or take on very gentle and limited physical activities; they eat restaurant foods or purchase prepared foods; and are too often busy taking care of themselves or their jobs, rather than families and community. As a result, they become “separated” from their bodies and from their society. Traditional medicine is mainly about *integration*, which is the opposite of this kind of separation.

The aim of treatments at IEP is to assist people in actively pursuing a healthy life style by alleviating symptoms that impair the ability to do so. In short, the IEP program is not about simply providing remedies for diseases and symptoms; it is about integration of the body, mind, and spirit, and this requires full participation of the patients.

How the Clinic is Set Up

The IEP clinic is intended to be a group setting—that is, where there is easy interaction between all the practitioners, patients, and staff—while maintaining as much as possible a quiet environment with few interruptions or disruptions. The basic concept of our service pattern is that patients come to our clinic for *brief* treatment sessions (half an hour), which are repeated frequently. The actual duration of time for receiving acupuncture (or massage therapy) is about 20-25 minutes, which is typical practice in China. With frequent visits, little time needs to be spent on discussion, which is usually limited to about 5 minutes (except during the initial visit). The treatments are supplemented by regular use of herbs, and by personal practices that reinforce this approach to health care. The original basis of this clinic is a model that was established in modern China: Patients would come to a group treatment room and sit and receive acupuncture each day for several days in a row, with practitioners going from patient to patient, inserting needles; the patients would complete a course of therapy in a few weeks or few months time; each week, those patients would pick up a prescription at the clinic pharmacy and at the end of the course of therapy, they might be given some pills to take for a longer period. At IEP, we changed from having patients sitting to lying down on comfortable treatment tables and we broke up the “group” session into a three-treatment table room plus other rooms with individual tables. Like the group session in China, there isn’t very much privacy, but the costs are low and patients have the opportunity to be treated by the entire staff of practitioners and to come frequently. In order to maintain a quiet atmosphere in the close quarters, we have divided the primary clinic space into seven sections:

- the practitioner/staff office; in the front, at **the main entry door** (office #2015)
- the set of three individual treatment rooms; behind the practitioner office space (#2015)
- the patient waiting area; in the front, at the secondary exit door (office #2009)
- the group treatment room; behind the screens and shelves (#2009)
- the shiatsu treatment room; behind the group treatment room (#2009)
- a multi-use room behind the shiatsu room (#2009)
- a consult room and extra waiting room (office #2007)

There are restrooms at the back of each of those areas. We ask that patients move through the reception area quickly and go on to the waiting area. If a patient is accompanied by family members or friends, we ask that they stay in the extra waiting area next door (office #2007), or if you need to stay at the clinic for some time after your treatment, please use that extra waiting area (similarly, if you are arriving very early, after checking in). Our clinic is set-up to provide acupuncture to three patients at a time during most of the clinic hours. Shiatsu is offered during similar hours. Thus, there may be four persons waiting in the front at one time to begin treatment shortly; we have an extra chair for a practitioner to join you if needed.

Signing Up for Visits

Our expectation is that you will get acupuncture at least once per week; more often if that is recommended to you (more frequent treatment is the standard approach for new patients). If there is a regular time when you are able to come to the clinic, it is possible to set-up a few appointments in advance at that time. If you need to adjust your appointment according to a changing schedule, you can examine our sign-up sheet for open slots; you can also call into our clinic to set appointments; if a convenient appointment was not available for you when you were seeking to set an appointment, you can ask to be called in the event of a cancellation. If you must cancel an appointment, please give us as much notice as possible so that we are able to offer that treatment time to someone else. It is important to recognize that repeated failure to come to appointments or to cancel with adequate notice can be reason for discontinuing participation in the program. When signing up for treatments, please do not remove the sign-up sheets from the counter; you may wish to first prepare your appointment book before approaching the counter to sign up. Please consult the IEP monthly schedule to find the best times to call (during clinic hours, preferably not on Monday morning or Tuesday morning).

Duration of Receiving Services at IEP

IEP is established for the purpose of gaining obvious improvements in your health and/or maintaining health while undergoing difficult procedures (such as chemotherapy). IEP is not intended as a place for getting a regular acupuncture “tune up.” A reasonable schedule of participation may be outlined as follows:

Time Frame	Description of Treatment	Notes
First 6 weeks	Evaluation period; about 8–12 acupuncture visits	In six weeks, you should be able to determine whether or not you like what our clinic offers, whether you can comply with the regimen, and whether there are any benefits to participation.
Next 3 months	One Course of Treatment; about 12–24 acupuncture visits	A course of treatment is a series of acupuncture sessions and a program of herbal therapy that is long enough to make a substantial change; in some cases, this single course of therapy will yield the maximum results that can be attained.
Next 3–9 months	Repeat Courses of Treatment; up to 100 acupuncture sessions	Some patients will need to repeat a course of therapy up to three more times in order to get the maximum results; this is especially the case for more severe disorders.

After one year of therapy, most patients should be finished with the IEP program, having determined a therapeutic regimen that works for them and having attained whatever results might be expected. Patients should then transition either to going without acupuncture (perhaps refilling some herb supplies from time to time) or to become a patient in a private practice. For some chronic degenerative diseases and for some incurable conditions, it may be determined that treatment at IEP should be continued beyond one year, for up to 5 years; during that time, further evaluation of certain therapies will be made. Patients seeking to utilize IEP services for more than a year must fill out an annual request form unless advised otherwise; sometimes continued treatment is recommended due to the nature of the disease process involved. In China, it is extremely rare for patients to get prolonged acupuncture therapy once the primary objectives are attained; instead, people rely on physical exercises, diet, herbs, and other means that are part of the daily habits. In order for IEP to provide effective treatments, we endeavor to make it a place that feels safe, comfortable, and reliable, with quality therapeutics; these qualities will also be found at many other such clinics, including those where our practitioners conduct their private practices. IEP is the place where intensive work is done to find a suitable regimen for dealing with the health problems that are faced. When completing therapy at IEP, a suggestion may be made to continue with certain supplements that can be obtained through the ITM supply office.

Things to avoid at IEP

The IEP clinic has some specific objectives, as described above, and there are some things that are specifically *not* included in the program. The following points will help clarify this issue:

- IEP practitioners are not in a position to evaluate therapies that you have heard about from friends, looked up on the internet, or have been recommended by non-medical practitioners. Except during your initial intake at IEP, where we will examine any supplements you are currently taking, practitioners should not be questioned about other remedies or encouraged to look up and read about other treatments. The IEP program is a comprehensive one and claimed therapies are regularly investigated and incorporated when they are deemed of potential value.
- IEP practitioners are not in a position to counsel you about psychological issues. If you are reporting to us repeatedly that you are experiencing “a lot of stress” from your daily circumstances, especially if you are seeking treatment for stress-related physical responses (such as insomnia), then you are strongly encouraged to seek out professional counseling to modify thought processes and for managing any brain function imbalances that might be contributing to these problems and also to speak with a competent spiritual advisor about making good choices that will then reduce stressful situations and ameliorate your reactions to them.
- IEP practitioners are not in a position to change your drug regimen. At IEP we rarely recommend that you consider discontinuing any prescribed drug unless the conditions that the drug is intended to treat have been sufficiently alleviated and then only after having you discuss with your doctor the possibility of deleting the therapy. Most importantly, if you are taking a “disease-modifying drug” (as opposed to a drug that only treats symptoms), you should continue its use unless you and your doctor have made a determination to discontinue it (for example, because side-effects are sufficiently severe).
- IEP practitioners should be informed of all relevant symptoms, but they are not required to provide treatment specific to each symptom. In particular, if symptoms are not characteristic of the disease under consideration or are not of critical importance to your health, these might not be addressed by the therapies administered at the clinic. While it is a general tenet of Chinese medicine theory that improving the underlying syndrome will *result* in many symptoms being relieved, it is not the purpose of the clinic to individually address each symptom.
- Unless you are specifically instructed otherwise, IEP *practitioners* should not be contacted by phone or e-mail. If you have questions about your case, complaints about your experience at IEP, concerns about the treatments given to you, or other matters, you should contact the director by e-mail (subhuti@itmonline.org). If you do not have e-mail, please write out your comments and leave a phone number for a response. You should also inquire about the possibility of meeting with the director at the time of your visit.
- You should make sure that *before* you take any supplement provided at IEP that you clearly understand what its purpose is, what the dosage is, and for how long you are to try it. However, IEP practitioners are not in a position to explain “how it works.” You may wish to examine articles on the ITM website (www.itmonline.org) to get a better idea of the theories and herbal approaches that are applied, even though information about specific formulas might not be provided.

When you rely on IEP for its primary offerings, you will get the most out of the brief visits and you will be able to pursue the path that leads to a healthier condition.

Note: If you list IEP as one of your treatment sites when providing information for a disability insurance claim or a law suit, please be aware that the recipient will be notified that we undertake no medical tests and conduct no formal medical evaluations. A summary of reports from the chart notes will be provided in a straightforward manner.