ACUPUNCTURE ANESTHESIA

SUBJECTS COVERED:

• What it does
• How it Works
• History
• References

Supportive Therapy during Dental Surgery

Excerpted and reprinted with permission from LaVar Riniker, DDS, retired.

What it Does

Acupuncture anesthesia works in combination with analgesic medications to block painful sensations. It also increases relaxation during potentially stressful dental procedures. Acupuncture interrupts the reception and interpretation of nerve stimulus as pain. It also generates endorphins, creating a feeling of well-being and ease. Acupuncture anesthesia is uniquely effective in situations where deep infection blocks the assimilation of pain medication. Using the meridians (the body's electrical system) to create the required numbness, it provides an alternate method to bypass discomfort. Acupuncture anesthesia supports the whole person during the procedure. An assessment is made and points are chosen which bolster vitality, calm the spirit and block pain. The client remains alert, yet comfortable and relaxed.

How it Works

Prior to and during surgery, tiny acupuncture needles are placed at various points on the body. The needles are manipulated manually for 10 minutes while a mild sensation (Qi) is achieved. A mild electrical stimulus is then applied to the needles and sustained for the duration of the dental procedure. (Medications are injected prior to the procedure). A signal system is established between the Client and the Acupuncturist so that the stimulus can be adjusted to the client's changing needs. Periodically throughout surgery the intensity of the stimulus may be increased, thus insuring the...
patient's comfort as the surgery may progress to more sensitive areas. At the end of surgery the acupuncture needles are removed. Feelings of numbness may persist for a short time.

History

Acupuncture anesthesia is widely practiced throughout China in all hospitals and has been found most effective for clinical operations at the head, face, jaw, EENT, neck and extremities. It was developed in China during the Cultural Revolution when medical workers were sent into rural areas with very little available medication. Physicians from around the world travel to China to study and research its growing applications.