

# Book Reviews

## Electroacupuncture: A Practical Manual and Resource

David F Mayor (editor)  
Elsevier Churchill Livingstone, 2007  
ISBN 0443063699  
381 pages

The recent publication of the long-awaited David Mayor book – *Electroacupuncture: A Practical Manual and Resource* – was well worth the wait. Given the widespread use of electrostimulation, there was a definite need for such a book. Published by Elsevier Churchill Livingstone, this 381-page hardcover text, as well as being a practical clinical manual and giving the basics, is also, as the title suggests, a valuable research resource for those who want to know more.

The text has three sections. Section one outlines the historical context (both East and West) of the development of electrotherapy and electroacupuncture. A table showing the important historical milestones of electrotherapy, electroacupuncture (EA) and manual acupuncture allows the reader to contextualise and compare their interaction and development over time.

Section two, the bulk of the book, details the scientific and clinical foundations of EA. The basic theory of electromagnetism and electrotherapy are discussed as are the neuroscience mechanisms that underlie the effects of EA. An interesting chapter, 'Does electroacupuncture work? Evaluating the controlled trials'

by Adrian White reviews the current evidence based on 400 references to trials of EA. Following this chapter occurs an extensive review of the effects of EA on various body systems, with international contributors adding to each area. Clinical areas reviewed include stroke and cerebrovascular disease, obstetrics and gynaecology, post-operative pain and addiction, amongst others.

Section three is the practical section of the book and begins with a chapter that deals with the available technology, including TENS and electro-diagnostic devices and their use. The following chapter explains the factors that need to be considered when purchasing a machine. Issues such as waveforms, pulse duration, size and design are discussed, and there is a review of the most common machines on the market. This section concludes with a review of the do's and don'ts of using electroacupuncture, magnets and TENS as well as a summary of how the technology can be practically integrated into clinical practice.

At the end of each chapter is a summary, an identification of additional information found on the companion CD and a list of recommended readings. The text has ample line drawings as well as case-study

text boxes which add to the clinical utility of the book. My only criticism has to do with formatting and the small font and line spacing. Compared to other Chinese medicine texts published by Churchill Livingstone, I found this book difficult to read, especially late at night! Given the breadth of information and scope of the book, the need to physically condense the text is understandable. Mayor, as he says in his preface, wanted it to be a resource, and in his quest to achieve that he has obviously reviewed and included a huge amount of published material. This is evident when looking at the companion CD, which has over 8000 references in its database! There are also two appendices, one listing websites, organisations and suppliers of the equipment (no Australian suppliers, unfortunately), while the second appendix looks at some of the issues of practising in a regulated environment, such as the European Union. Finally, Mayor has included a very helpful glossary defining many medical and technical terms. This book sets the standard and will be a valuable asset for any practitioner who uses or will want to incorporate electroacupuncture into daily practice.

*Christopher Zaslawski*

## Shen: Psycho-emotional Aspects of Chinese Medicine

Elisa Rossi  
Churchill Livingstone Elsevier, 2007  
ISBN 0443101817  
452 pages

Shen is a complicated yet important Chinese medicine concept. Experienced acupuncturists always consider Shen in their practice. The ancient text *Neijing Lingshu* states that 'when needling, one must focus on Shen'. A famous acupuncturist, Zhou De An, says 'the foremost important principle when treating pain conditions is to calm the Shen'. There is, however, little English literature discussing Shen, despite its clinical significance. *Dragon Rises, Red Birds Fly: Psychology and Chinese Medicine* by Leon Hammer is the earliest book in this area.

*Shen*, a 452-page book, is the second book of this kind. The book was initially published in Italian in 2002. Its English edition is published in 2007. The author Dr Elisa Rossi is an acupuncturist and psychotherapist practising in Milan, Italy.

*Shen* has four sections. In the first section, Dr Rossi introduces the Daoist concept of health and life preservation (*Yang Sheng*). She also explains how five emotions and five types of Shen impact the movement of Qi and cause or worsen illnesses. In the second section, clinical conditions, such as restlessness and insomnia, are analysed with Chinese medicine theories, and their management is explained. The third section details the therapeutic approaches to treating Shen in different syndromes, such as Heart

Fire or Obstruction by Phlegm-Tan. Other important aspects of the treatment of Shen, including needling techniques and patient-practitioner interaction, are also discussed. The last section consists of writings from seven experts presenting their own clinical experiences of treating psychological conditions.

Before reading the book, I had four questions in my mind. (1) Will the author discuss Shen with a focus on psychological conditions, or expand the concept of Shen in commonly seen conditions? (2) Will clinical cases be used to further illustrate the views? (3) Will the author discuss cultural differences in the understanding and expression of emotion? (4) Will the author present her integrated understanding of psychotherapy and Chinese medicine?

Using ample classic literature and many clinical cases, Rossi shows the readers that disturbance of Shen exists not only in patients who complain of insomnia or palpitation (typical symptoms of Shen disorders), but also in most common complaints, such as bodily pain. Successful treatment of Shen might lead to a complete resolution of pain. This answers my first and second questions.

The cultural difference in the expression of emotion is an issue for Chinese medicine practitioners with Asian backgrounds. Rossi mentions that Chinese medicine

sees emotion as an integral part of health, but Chinese people seldom express their emotion compared to Europeans. This topic is, however, not expanded to the extent I would like to see.

My fourth question is partially answered in Chapters 15 and 16 of the book. These two chapters are particularly relevant to all acupuncturists. Rossi shares her insights with real-life questions. She asks us to examine ourselves when a patient who once liked us becomes hostile. Using her own cases, she illustrates when the boundary of a patient-therapist relationship is crossed and what the practitioner should do. Her knowledge of psychotherapy frequently appears in these chapters and gives the readers a better appreciation of our clinical practice.

This book is comprehensive, and can be used as a textbook or resource book on Shen and Chinese medicine. It is particularly useful for teaching and for Chinese medicine students. Most clinicians are familiar with the theories presented in the book. However, clinicians will certainly benefit from the vast range of classic literature cited in the book and from knowing how common clinical conditions are treated with different methods. Furthermore, Chapters 15 and 16 should be read by every practitioner to gain a deeper understanding of our role as acupuncturists.

*Zhen Zheng*