

News in Brief

By Editorial Staff

Basketball Star Scores with Acupuncture

Allan Houston is one of the best shooting guards in professional basketball. As we go to press, he's averaging 22.6 points per game for the New York Knicks (making him the 12th leading scorer in the National Basketball Association), and is leading the NBA in free-throw percentage.

He's also the only player in the NBA to score 50 or more points in multiple games this year.

While Houston is enjoying arguably the best season of his 10-year career, it nearly came to a crashing halt last year. In November 2002, he suffered an injury on the big toe of his right foot; the following month, he sprained his ankle. Frustrated, he turned to John Tran, an acupuncturist in Houston, Texas, for help.

On Dec. 26, Tran treated Houston's ankle. The following night, Houston scored 20 points to lead the Knicks to a 99-83 win over the Houston Rockets. On Feb. 9, Houston saw Tran again for an acupuncture session on the toe and ankle, and also brought a teammate, point guard Charlie Ward, to be treated for an abdominal strain. Since that time, Houston has averaged a team-high 26.2 points per game, Ward has increased his scoring and shooting percentage, and the Knicks have slowly pulled back into contention for a playoff spot.

"They had great response from this guy and his technique," Knicks coach Don Chaney told the *Newark Star-Ledger*, alluding to Tran's therapy. "Both guys feel he's helped them a great deal in terms of getting the joint loose and making them feel better and easing the pain."

Houston agreed. "This is a little different from regular acupuncture," he said. He (Tran) goes more into your joints and basically lubricates your joints."

Based on the results he's seen in Houston and Ward, Chaney has considered sending more players to Tran for treatment.

"Allan is hurting, and so is Charlie. And Kurt (forward Kurt Thomas) and Othella (forward Othella Harrington), Chaney said. "All those guys should be down there. I don't know what his technique is, but he does a lot of other things. They truly believe in him, so it makes sense."

Five Branches Institute Puts Chinese Medicine on Display

On March 2, Five Branches Institute held a Chinese medicine health fair at the school's campus in Santa Cruz, Calif. At the fair, senior interns and faculty members provided free medical diagnoses and consultations to the public, along with complementary mini-acupuncture treatments.

Visitors also were treated to a variety of short lectures on health topics; free tai chi and qigong classes; tours of the school's herbal pharmacy; demonstrations of pediatric Chinese massage; Chinese tea, herbs and health snacks; and discount coupons for future visits to the institute's clinic.

"This health fair is a great opportunity for people to learn about Chinese medicine and give it a try for free," said Ron Zaidman, Five Branches' CEO and co-founder. He added that the clinic sees approximately 100 patients per day, the majority of which come for acupuncture, herbal remedies or massage.

Five Branches is one of the oldest Chinese medicine schools in the country. It was founded in 1984 and accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine in May 1996. The school derives its name from the "five branches" of traditional Chinese medicine used to maintain and restore health naturally: acupuncture, herbology, Chinese massage, *qigong* and diet.

Missouri Court Program Uses Acupuncture to Help Kids Off Drugs

In January 2002, officials from Buchanan County, Mo., created a juvenile drug court to help kids lose the craving for illegal drugs. Now in its second year of operation, the program utilizes acupuncture, along with behavior modification and other therapies, to promote a substance-abuse-free lifestyle.

Children in drug court are randomly selected to receive acupuncture. While they are not required to submit to treatment, they are encouraged to do so. Acupuncture is delivered by Chuck Hughes, a licensed acupuncturist and doctor of chiropractic. Specific points on the ear are stimulated, either with needles or electric current, to help reduce cravings.

To date, nine children have received acupuncture from Dr. Hughes. Lisa Cronk, the drug court's program coordinator, said she's seen a change in the behavior of children treated with acupuncture.

"Almost all of the kids say it makes them feel more relaxed, and that they're not thinking about drugs as often," Cronk said.



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