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## **"Acupuncture vs. Meridian Therapy: Is There a Difference?" 16 Years Later!**

By John Amaro, LAc, Dipl. Ac. (NCCAOM), FIAMA, DC

In terms of one person performing something on another, it's been estimated more people throughout the course of history have received acupuncture than the combined total of all other healing principles worldwide.

The foregoing paragraph is precisely how I began my first article, "Acupuncture vs. Meridian Therapy: Is There a Difference?" in the October 1, 1988 issue of *Dynamic Chiropractic*. In the 16 years since that first article appeared, I have had the honor and privilege of contributing close to 200 articles and commentaries dealing with the field of acupuncture and meridian therapy. The majority of these articles have focused on the academia of clinical acupuncture; however, it has been impossible not to deal with the ever-evolving issues of politics that have challenged both the Oriental medicine and chiropractic professions.

The title and concept of that first article are just as legislatively significant today as they were then. Since 1988, more than a dozen states have added acupuncture to their chiropractic scope of practice. This brings the total of states that now have specific laws regulating the practice of needle acupuncture for DCs to over 30. The remaining states have hundreds of practitioners who utilize the accepted and popular forms of noninvasive forms of acupuncture, referred to as "meridian therapy."

The National Board of Chiropractic Examiners (NBCE), in its most recent survey analysis and summary of the practice of chiropractic in the United States, showed specifically that 13.6 percent of the practicing DCs in the nation utilize needle acupuncture as a routine procedure in their clinical practices. The College of Chiropractic Acupuncture of the American Chiropractic Association estimates this figure to be closer to 18 percent. This amounts to between 8,500 and 11,000 chiropractic practitioners who utilize needle acupuncture daily.

In addition, the latest NBCE survey specifically shows that 58.2 percent of the profession, or 35,743 chiropractors, utilize the principle of meridian acupuncture thru noninvasive meridian therapy in their daily practices. Please note: This is neither Oriental medicine, nor is it termed traditional Chinese medicine. It is clearly meridian therapy, which bases itself on the principle of meridian acupuncture, but utilizes non-needle forms of stimulation.

Again, I quote from that first article:

Even in those states forbidding the use of acupuncture, it was practiced under the physiotherapy law as the profession realized "acupuncture is a principle, not a technique." It became obvious to the profession that needles were not necessary to positively affect an acupuncture response. Today, many of our chiropractic leaders at the state level still resist allowing the word "acupuncture." However, "meridian therapy" is permissible.

As acupuncture needles slowly slip into oblivion and electronic and laser stimulation come to the forefront, please remember ... "Acupuncture is a principle, not a technique." There is no difference between "meridian therapy" and "acupuncture" philosophically, theoretically, clinically or practically, only semantically."

The chiropractic profession is in an incredible position for practice growth, as statistics show over 60 percent of the public is needlephobic, and would not seek the services of an Oriental medicine practitioner utilizing needle acupuncture. As I pointed out 16 years ago, "Acupuncture is a principle, not a technique"; it is not necessarily how it is administered, but where it is applied. The utilization of electronic or laser stimulation over acupuncture, trigger or reflex points is referred to as "transcutaneous reflex therapy"(TNS). Understanding how to apply acupuncture is essential; however, utilizing the noninvasive techniques to apply it falls within the scope of practice of virtually all DCs nationally.

To answer the question posed 16 years ago; "Acupuncture vs. Meridian Therapy: Is There a Difference?" the answer is, **"No!"**

When I was first introduced as a new columnist to *DC*, I was humbled beyond words. After all, one of the true legends of the chiropractic profession, Donald M. Petersen Sr., founder of *DC*, had invited me to be a part of his staff of columnists. In fact, to quote from the 1988 issue: "DMP decided that the one to ask to take on the responsibility of educating his colleagues on acupuncture was Dr. John Amaro." Wow!

One cannot really truly understand the meaning of being humbled unless you have experienced the multitude of letters, e-mail and faxes from literally all parts of the globe, from doctors thanking me or reporting of a seemingly miraculous response that occurred as the result of an article I wrote concerning some condition or concept. I have had hundreds over the years.

In all of my writing, I have only repeated two articles, both by popular request. One was "Pearls of Wisdom" ("Breath of the Dragon"), and the other was "So, When Are You Going to Have a Baby?" More than 1,000 babies have been conceived worldwide as a direct result of that article! I often think how many new generations of DCs have joined the profession who never had an opportunity to see some of those earlier articles. However, all of those earliest articles can be accessed through the archives at [www.chiroweb.com/archives](http://www.chiroweb.com/archives).

My congratulations to you, Donald M. Petersen Jr., for accepting the monumental task of taking over the helm of *Dynamic Chiropractic* following the untimely death of your father. You have taken this publication to the pinnacle of success, in addition to creating *Acupuncture Today (AT)* and *Massage Today* - projects that would humble the most accomplished corporate executive.

It is my honor to be involved with both DC and AT. With the help of the numerous people who make up the editorial, production, administration, graphic design and other departments, continued success is assured.

And congratulations Don and staff for producing your 500th issue. You have truly proved the adage, "The pen is mightier than the sword." Not many people can do what you have done. The chiropractic profession is truly blessed to have you. Your dad would be very proud.

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Click [here](#) for more information about John Amaro, LAc, Dipl. Ac. (NCCAOM), FIAMA, DC.



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