History of Veterinary Acupuncture
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Acupuncture has been used on animals for over 4000 years. Legend has it that veterinary acupuncture was discovered when lame horses used in battle were found to become sound after being hit by arrows at distinct points. In any event, there is evidence that Chinese “horse priests”, the caretakers of the army’s horses, practiced acupuncture during the Zang and Chow Dynasties around 2000-3000 BC. Numerous texts on veterinary acupuncture and old engravings of cows and horses, on which acupuncture points have been marked, are dated back to as early as 221 BC. During the Zhou dynasty (1122-770 BC), veterinary acupuncture was designated as a separate branch of traditional Chinese medicine.

The study of veterinary acupuncture had reached Europe by the 17th century. It gained popularity in the United States during the Nixon era with a special symposium entitled, "Acupuncture for the Veterinarian" held in the United States in 1974.

Veterinary Acupuncture - When and Why to Choose Acupuncture for Your Animal

Acupuncture works exceptionally well on animals and is a popular treatment choice for owners of horses as well as the beloved family pooch. A veterinarian may choose to use acupuncture to treat your animal for a wide variety of conditions including pain, digestive problems and immune conditions. As with acupuncture on humans, acupuncture works for a wide array of heath problems for animals.

The Veterinary Acupuncture Treatment

Veterinary acupuncture is traditionally performed with sterilized, stainless-steel needles that are as fine as a human hair, but today, treatments might involve lasers, injections, heat, cold, pressure, electricity, and even implants of gold and silver.

There seems to be little sensitivity to the insertion of acupuncture needles. They are so thin that several acupuncture needles can go into the middle of a hypodermic needle. Occasionally, there is a brief moment of discomfort as the needle penetrates the skin, but once the needles are in place, most animals relax and even fall asleep for the duration of the treatment.

The length, number and frequency of treatments will vary. Typical treatments last from five to 30 minutes, with the patient being treated one or two times a week. Some symptoms are relieved after the first treatment, while more severe or chronic ailments often require multiple treatments.

Most veterinary acupuncturists in North America and Europe use a combination of two techniques to stimulate acupuncture points. They use the thin, sterilized, stainless-steel needles and a technique called, aqua-puncture. This technique involves injection of a liquid such as, saline or vitamin B12, with a hypodermic needle into the acupuncture point. While hypodermic needles are thicker than acupuncture needles and their insertion is more painful, aqua-puncture is popular in veterinary acupuncture because animals are more likely to move during treatment, which makes it difficult to maintain acupuncture needles in certain points.

How to Choose an Acupuncturist for you Animal

Today, veterinary acupuncture is an acknowledged and respected field of medicine which requires formal training and certification in order to practice. In most States, provinces and countries, veterinary acupuncture is considered a surgical procedure that, legally, may only be performed by a licensed doctor of
veterinary medicine. Some states licensed acupuncturists can treat animals with a referral from a veterinarian.

Look for a veterinarian with formal training in the practice of animal acupuncture. Acupuncture and Oriental medicine is an art and a science that takes years to master. While any licensed vet can stick needles into an animal, for a positive experience and results, find a veterinary acupuncturist with experience treating a similar condition (with acupuncture) to what your animal has.

There are acupuncturists that treat animals listed on www.Acufinder.com. If, however, you are unable to find one on this site, there are two organizations that certify veterinary acupuncturists that you should check out.

The American Academy of Veterinary Acupuncture
www.aava.org

The International Veterinary Acupuncture Society