

# THE SCIENCE OF ACUPUNCTURE

January 3, 2006

By: Ivanhoe Newswire

Acupuncture is shown in scientific studies to help many illnesses and ailments. But there hasn't been a lot of research showing just what happens when those needles enter the skin. Now, researchers are uncovering new clues.

Acupuncture can help back pain, arthritis, even acid reflux, but just what do these tiny needles do?

"I became curious and actually decided to go to acupuncture school and study part-time while I was practicing medicine," says Helene Langevin, M.D., an internist and researcher at University of Vermont in Burlington.

While studying what happens during acupuncture, Dr. Langevin found something remarkable. "The tissues actually appear to grab the needle, winding around the needle, just like winding spaghetti around a fork, basically," she tells Ivanhoe.

Dr. Langevin and her colleagues designed a special device to measure what happens during acupuncture. They found when needles enter the skin, the connective tissue changes. Connective tissue is essential for well-being. It connects, supports and binds the body's tissue and organs.

Dexter Randall -- a no-nonsense farmer -- had concerns about acupuncture. But he was losing a 12-year battle with back pain. "I was just full of frustration and in pain and one day, I said 'why not?'"

He sought help from acupuncturist Robert Davis. And almost immediately, acupuncture did what chiropractors, massage and physical therapy never could. Randall says, "I can go back and actually go out and do a day's work and feel like I'm going to survive to see the next day."

Dr. Langevin says helping doctors understand, and better yet, see what acupuncture does in the body is a step in the right direction. She says the effect on the connective tissue might not just stop with acupuncture. She says the discovery may help explain why any therapy that manipulates connective tissue, like massage for example, is beneficial.

# HOW DOES ACUPUNCTURE EASE THE PAIN?

January 3, 2006

By: Jennifer Matthews, News 14 Carolina

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