



Is the answer to pain in the palm of your hand? **HealthSupplement**

Anika Sorenstam - putting Woods in the shade: **SportsTuesday**



## YourHealth

# Answer to pain in the palm of your hand?



A combination of new technology and ancient therapy is being put to the test. Niamh Hooper reports

Trade shows tend to be like bazaars with an array of gimmicks, gadgets and gizmos promising you a panacea to all ills. The recent Mind, Body, Spirit Show in the RDS was no different.

Despite my reservations, a friend, excited by what he had experienced, dragged me along to one stall. On display was a machine used in the Far East as a diagnostic tool as well as for pain relief, both professionally and personally. The light, portable Aculife Magnetic Wave Therapist integrates traditional Chinese acupuncture and preventative medical technology using the meridian points on the hands and in the ears.

Worldwide stories are many, varied and, according to a Taiwanese news crew, far more exciting. In a broadcast from the International Medical Equipment Show in Taipei in November 2000 a television news crew reported that the machine was having such a marked effect on male sexual performance that it was nicknamed "electronic viagra". Its popularity

increased further when word spread that no injections or drugs were involved - just the stimulation of a specific point.

Its role in perking up a flagging love life aside, the Aculife Magnetic Wave Therapist has been certified in Europe and approved by the US Federal Drug Administration and the World Federation of Acupuncture-Moxibustion Societies (WFAS) in Beijing. Based on his own experience, WFAS's chairman, Deng Lianyue, proclaims the easy-to-use hand-held device will greatly enhance the flexibility of self-diagnosis and self-therapy.

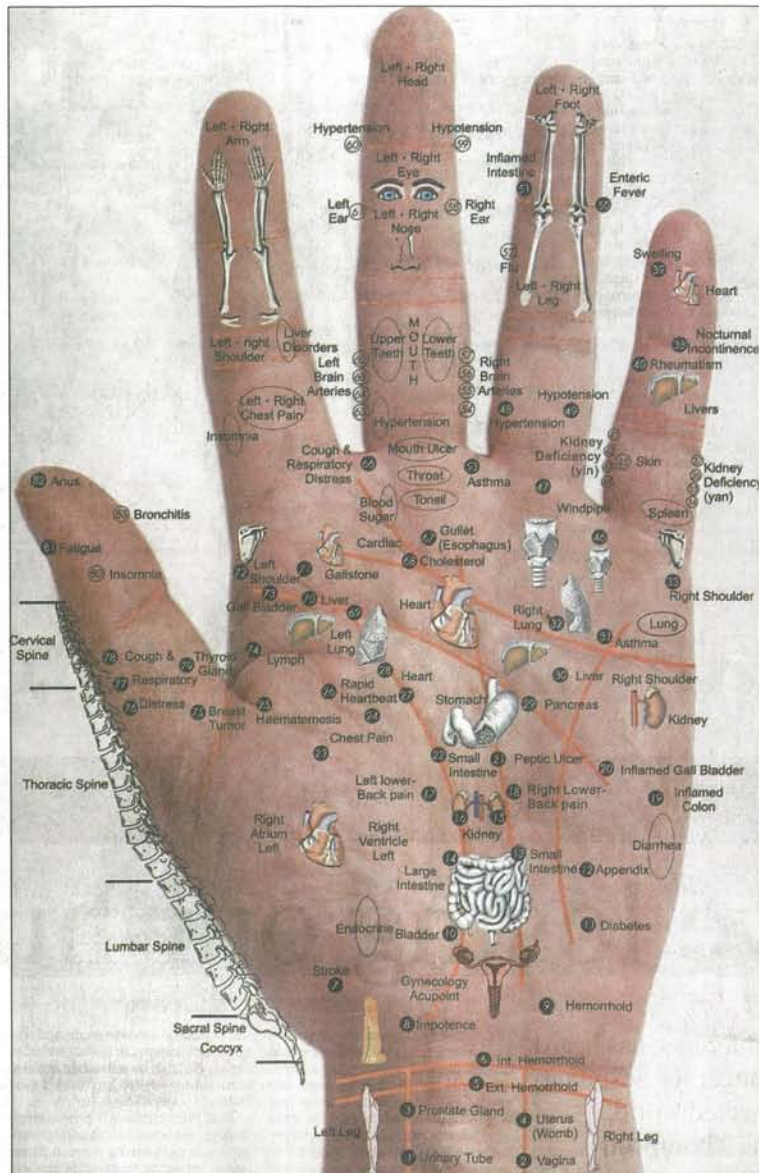
"After using it regularly following instruction, I have found relief and improvement in the affected part of my body. It has been found to have beneficial effect for some illness and may be used as a preventative measure against some complaints," he says.

Clinical testing of the light portable device on 150 patients in Taipei showed a 93 per cent success rate of acupuncture points, bioelectricity and hypertension. Some 115 cases reported an outstanding effect.

Traditional Chinese and Eastern medicine postulates that if a disease or imbalance develops inside the body, the signs of that disease will manifest itself on the outside of the body.

If the Chi (energy) is blocked, there will be pain; if it flows harmoniously, there will be no pain.

Acupuncture and reflexology is based on rebalancing the Chi by stimulating the relevant meridian



The Aculife Magnetic Wave Therapist device integrates traditional Chinese acupuncture and preventative medical technology using the meridian points on the hands and in the ears.

don't work but daily use of the Aculife machine helps me to sleep at night," he says.

Special needs teacher from Bray, Co Dublin, Siobhan Rattigan had a severe, dull, cold pain in her shoulder and neck and decided to try out the Aculife machine.

"I used it for 15 minutes one night and then I hopped out of the bed the next day not a bother on me. I couldn't believe it. I thought jeppers there's something in this," she says. "It's also great as a diagnostic tool. I'm prone to asthma and whenever I'm feeling a bit chesty it picks it up every time."

Mother of two grown-up children, Claire Markey from Dublin's Mount Merrion says she didn't know anything about it when she first tried it out on family and friends over Christmas.

"It correctly picked up on my high blood pressure, my husband's arthritis and pain in other parts of the body for other people. It was spot on," she says.

Meanwhile, chartered physiotherapist Neville Coen has been using the Aculife machine since January with private patients willing to try it out as a treatment tool.

"I've used it outside the parameters of normal treatment techniques and I've found it to be very effective especially on painful backs, knees, hamstring injuries and arthritic pain," he says.

"And I had one woman who had a really bad shoulder pain for years on whom I used it. She rang me afterwards and said for the first time in years she'd been pain-free and wanted another treatment with it."

Based on the reaction of his patients, he says it seems to be more beneficial than ultrasound and interferential treatment and he intends to introduce it into his physiotherapy treatment of members of Bray Wanderers and the County Wicklow Gaelic Football teams.

While studies have taken place in Asia, he feels it is important to have a study conducted in Europe into the validity of the anecdotal evidence.

Aculife machines have been submitted to the National Rehabilitation Hospital in Dún Laoghaire and to numerous medical doctors for clinical trials.

◆ The Aculife Magnetic Wave Therapist costs €265. For further information, contact Niall Strickland on 01 624 0841 or log on to [www.aculife-ireland.com](http://www.aculife-ireland.com)

points. Acupuncture uses needles anywhere on the body while reflexology applies pressure manually on the soles of the feet. As with the feet, it is believed you can access every part of your body - including your heart, lungs, spine, liver, colon, bladder and intestines - from your hand and the outer ear. It is these points that Aculife uses.

Some 16 years in development by renowned scientists Dr Xia Lei and Dr Chiang Chih Cheng, the device is the result of co-ordinated research in Japan, China and Taiwan into the effects of magnetism and magnetic therapy.

Using magnetic waves rather than needles, it is claimed Aculife provides relief for more than 27 medical conditions such as migraine,

hypertension, asthma, sciatica, tinnitus, constipation, haemorrhoids, high blood pressure, insomnia, ulcers, influenza and skin problems in addition to improving blood circulation by magnetising the blood and boosting the immune system in a non-invasive way and with no side-effects.

Aculife is only recently available in Ireland. Niall Strickland, from Lucan, came across the machine in Hong Kong. "By running the probe over my hand it correctly diagnosed the disc problem I have and a pain I'd had in my shoulder for a month. The acupoint for the shoulder was stimulated for 15 minutes after which the pain was gone and hasn't returned. That was eight months ago," says the 46-year-old manage-

ment consultant.

"I've since learned that magnetic therapies and acupuncture don't actually 'cure' anything - nor do they ever claim to. Their role is to stimulate the body's natural defence mechanism into action. Aculife does this by creating a magnetic wave from the palm of the hand to the ear and this wave action goes to the root of any blockages in the meridians of the body. It's a mirror of traditional acupuncture without the needles.

"It's not a cure all but it has helped the ongoing problem I've had for years with the lowest disc in my back which has worn away and a nerve is trapped which causes referred sciatic pain in my calf. Orthopaedic surgeons won't operate and anti-inflammatories