

October 23, 2004

Hi Everyone!

We have just finished our second month of acupuncture at Mae On Hospital. The patients are getting incredible results with decreasing or resolving the chronic symptoms of HIV as well as decreasing the side effects of the anti-retroviral drugs. These conditions include numbness, headaches, dizziness, insomnia, fatigue, digestive problems and pain. Does it make any of you want to try acupuncture? It does with the staff at the hospital. They are constantly asking if they can have acupuncture for various ailments!! Several of the patients have no more complaints and describe their energy levels as 10/10 (10 being the highest) and no stress!! With these patients, we are now working strictly on enhancing their immune systems.



Jeed (left) and Unchalee (right) doing acupuncture.



Each week several of the patients bring us presents from their gardens such as fresh guava, star fruit, passion fruit, pumpkins and corn. One patient even prepared some “som tum” (spicy papaya salad). Mmmm good!!! And the staff try to get us to eat the local food. Below are larvae that they gathered from the woods around the hospital. They fry it up and eat as snacks. I am told it’s very good but my mind won’t allow them to go into my mouth!



The nurses are doing great and have now started doing the interviewing of patients, the traditional Chinese medicine diagnosis and treatment. We are also training supportive staff in Chinese Tui Na (massage) as well as moxibustion.



Unchalee doing moxa (left).

Laura reviewing acupuncture point location with Jeed (right).

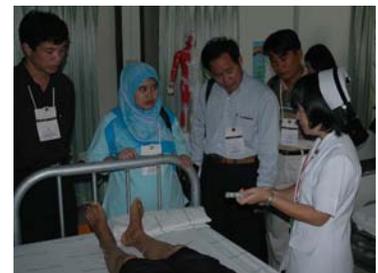


We have had many visiting doctors to the Mae On Acupuncture Clinic from Laos, Myramar, Vietnam, Cambodia, Bhutan and the USA. As you know Mae On Hospital is very progressive at integrating conventional medicine with complementary medicine (Thai traditional medicine) in the treatment of HIV/AIDS. Our hospital acupuncture clinic for HIV is the only one in Thailand and SE Asia.



Laura explaining acupuncture in the treatment of HIV/AIDS to visiting doctors from Vietnam (left).

Unchalee explaining moxibustion to visitors from Laos, Myramar and Cambodia (right).



Unchalee, the head nurse of the HIV program and public health in this district has been impressed by the acupuncture results. She hopes to expand the acupuncture program next year to include health promotion and the general public. Of course, she will continue to run the acupuncture clinic for the HIV/AIDS patients weekly. Whew, where does she get the energy!!!

I know many of you still ask me questions about the weather. I must say that the last 6 weeks have been very pleasant. It's the rainy season here which means much cooler weather (30 to 35 C) and monsoon rains. One day when I was coming back from Mae On Hospital, I was caught in a torrential downpour. By the time I got back to Chiang Mai, there was about a foot of brown water running down the streets and sheets of water pouring off the roofs onto the sidewalks. Unfortunately the songthaew driver stopped right under a waterfall. Needless to say, I got completely soaked!! After I got out of the songthaew, I thought maybe I'd wait till the rain lets up, which it usually does after one hour. Well I waited and I waited but there was no end in sight and it was even getting worse. So I walked out into the pouring rain to flag a tuk tuk. When I got to my guesthouse the whole soi was flooded with a 2 foot high 'river'. The heavy rain continued for hours. Good thing I didn't wait!!



For those who haven't seen a tuk tuk, it is basically a three-wheeled motorcycle with a roof and a cozy back seat for two westerners or four Thais (left).

We hope you are all doing well and thanks again for supporting the Mae On Project.

With Abundant Health & Peace,

Laura



P.S.



Couldn't resist adding these photos of this chow dog on the motorcycle at the Sangkampaeng market. He waited on the motorcycle very patiently for his owner for about 15 minutes, never moving. When his owner came back, she sat behind him and they both rode off. She did the driving. Only in Thailand!!