

June 22, 2005

Hi Everyone,

We're back in beautiful, steamy Thailand. It's the rainy season here with monsoon storms and thunder and lightning. It's spectacular!!



Reclining Buddha at
Wat Chedi Luang

The Mae On Project is going really well. The nurses have been on their own running the HIV Acupuncture clinic for two months now. Dr. Rungrat continues to be a consultant for any questions the nurses have. I am back supervising at the clinic and am very impressed by the nurses' acupuncture skills, diagnosis and treatments. The impact of the acupuncture with the HIV patients has also been successful. The patients have continued to improve over the last two months. For example, four new patients we saw two months ago complained of insomnia and now all of them have had a complete resolution of this symptom. They continue to come in for acupuncture every two to four weeks to balance and strengthen their immune systems. Our old patients also continue to improve and now most come in specifically for balancing and building of their immune systems.



Above right: HIV Acupuncture Clinic at Mae On Hospital in full swing.

Above Left: Unchalee interviewing a patient before acupuncture.



Laura (left) and Unchalee (right) confirming acupuncture point location.

As you know before I left Thailand last time, the hospital, impressed by the results of the acupuncture, requested that three more nurses be trained. I am happy to say that we were able to provide the training. Dr. Rungrat and Dr. Sudhisak are currently teaching the Fundamentals in Traditional Chinese Medicine with the new nurses (Ting, Khai and Tik). The nurses are very keen to be able to learn a new skill to help patients.



Above Left: Ting (nurse), Laura, Khai (nurse), Richard (our favourite acupuncture man), Tik (nurse) and Dr. Rungrat (from left to right).



Above Right: Acupuncture training room at Mungkala Clinic in Chiang mai.

Once the basic acupuncture training is finished with the three new nurses, Dr. Rungrat will teach a course on Advanced Acupuncture Therapeutics for all five nurses. The course will run for eleven months and be taught at the Mungkala Clinic in Chiang Mai. Dr. Rungrat will also be making site visits to the acupuncture clinic at Mae On Hospital to help with the clinical training.



Above left and right: Dr. Rungrat teaching nurses acupuncture technique and point location at Mungkala Clinic in Chiang Mai.

This week we again had 4th year medical students from Chiang Mai University and two American students who are studying public health, visit the acupuncture clinic at Mae On Hospital. They were very curious and asked many excellent questions. Sarinee, Wanida and Harry demonstrated tui na massage on some of the students while others experienced having acupuncture with Unchalee and me.



Above left: Medical students from Chiang Mai University visiting the acupuncture clinic at Mae On Hospital.

Above right: Laura explaining the benefits of acupuncture for patients living with HIV at Mae On Hospital.



Above left: One of the public health students from the USA getting a tui na massage from Wanida (acupuncture assistant) at Mae On Hospital.

Above right: Harry giving tui na massage to medical student from Chiang Mai University at Mae On Hospital.

Right: Unchalee demonstrating acupuncture on a medical student from Chiang Mai University at Mae On Hospital.



We are busy inputting and evaluating the data from our acupuncture pilot study. As you know we hope to present our findings and positive experiences at the 2006 Global Summit on HIV/AIDS, Traditional Medicine & Indigenous Knowledge in Ghana (West Africa) as well as the 2006 International Conference on AIDS in Toronto. A big thank you to Judy Kumar, Bonnie Nicholson and Dr. Debra Gibson who volunteered to input the large amount of data from the questionnaires! You are all incredible!! And many, many thanks to Dr. Heather Greenlee who has been extremely generous in answering our infinite questions about the research spreadsheets. We couldn't have done it without you!

We are very excited to announce that we are taking the Mae On Project to Africa, where as you know, the need is great. Our hope is to expand the program to include other complementary and alternative medicines as well as nutritional and educational programs.

According to the latest UN estimates over three million people will lose their life because of the complications of AIDS during 2005. This is more annual AIDS deaths than ever before. While working towards the ultimate goal of universal access to anti-retroviral drugs is essential, we must also strive for the goal of keeping three million people alive in all possible ways.

The Mae On Project's goal to balance and strengthen the immune system, to improve the quality of life and to decrease the symptoms of chronic HIV will most certainly help keep people alive and healthy while they wait for the anti-retroviral drugs. By using complementary and alternative medicine, education and nutritional support, the Mae On Project will help fill this gap in HIV/AIDS care services.

We hope you enjoyed our update and thank you for your continued support!!

Yours In Health,

Laura

