

## Acupuncturist MD honored

Dr Chan Gunn, well known in Vancouver for his pioneering work in the successful treatment of chronic pain, has been honored by the Acupuncture Foundation of Canada. Dr Gunn has been named the Clifford G. Woolfe Lecturer, an honor awarded annually for "significant contributions to the science of the clinical practice of acupuncture".



Dr C. Chan Gunn

Dr Gunn has developed a form of medical acupuncture called intramuscular stimulation, with which he has achieved excellent results among patients for whom all commonly used therapies, including traditional acupuncture, had failed. His research into

chronic pain began when he was clinic physician at the Workers' Compensation Board of BC, from 1967 to 1980. Frustrated by the lack of relief offered chronic pain sufferers by such traditional treatments as physiotherapy, exercise, medication, and surgery, he studied acupuncture in the early 1970s. He has been teaching and writing about chronic pain and IMS for the past 15 years.

Dr Gunn's theory of neuropathic pain was published in the *Annals of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada* in July 1989. "Treatment commonly fails because medical diagnosis traditionally presumes that pain is a signal of tissue injury conveyed to the central nervous system via a healthy nervous system. But that is rarely the case in chronic pain when there's no ongoing nociception or inflammation. Pain then is generally caused by functional disturbances in the nervous system, typically neuropathy, which leads to abnormal sensitivity in the pain sensory system."

Patients with neuropathic pain have tender, shortened muscles, which can become painful and which can pull on tendons, causing tendinitis, or on joints, causing arthralgia. Shortened muscles in the spine squeeze intervertebral discs, so nerves become more irritable, causing more spasm. Dr Gunn discovered that needling the shortened muscles releases muscle spasm, and he has developed simple clinical tests that doctors can use for diagnosing neuropathic pain.

In 1985, Dr Gunn was invited to become a clinical professor and lecturer at the Multidisciplinary Pain Center at the University of Washington School of Medicine in Seattle. His methods of examination, diagnosis, and treatment have recently been included as recommended techniques in the latest edition of Bonica's standard medical textbook on pain. Dr Gunn's own textbook, *Treating Myofascial Pain*, is currently going into its second edition with a new publisher, Churchill Livingstone. He won the Physical Medicine Research Foundation's 1993 Dr James Beaver Mennell Award for Excellence in Rehabilitation and the Dag Hammarskjöld International Award for Alternative Medicine.

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