

Preface

In my clinical practice, I treat weight loss patients on a daily basis. Many patients present with weight loss as their chief or secondary complaint. Some of them come in with preconceptions about how acupuncture is used to treat weight loss. They often ask, “Is it true that ear tacks can make you lose weight?” This question reveals their hopeful assumption that acupuncture provides a quick fix to their weight loss problems. With a friendly smile, I gently respond, “No, unfortunately there is no magic bullet for weight loss; no one magic ear or body acupoint will melt away the pounds. If it did, I would be a fabulously rich woman with a line of patients stretching from New York to California! However, the good news is that a holistic approach to weight loss, including acupuncture, Chinese herbs, diet, and exercise is very successful. Many of my weight loss patients lose an average of 10 percent of body weight (5-15 pounds) in 2-3 months. But first, you have to become committed to making changes in lifestyle, and, during our treatment sessions, I’ll counsel you on making and maintaining these changes.”

This manual is about the integrated Chinese-Western medical treatment of overweight and obesity. I have written it so that practitioners of acupuncture and Chinese medicine can immediately integrate the best of Chinese medicine with the most up-to-date insights of biomedical weight loss research. Within this book, readers will find acupuncture, Chinese herbal, and Chinese dietary protocols, modern nutritional therapies, and modern exercise research and therapy along with the National Institutes for Health (NIH) guidelines for the assessment and treatment of overweight and obesity as well as guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the American Heart Association (AHA). Rather

than trying to reinvent the wheel by rewriting or reformatting existing guidelines for the treatment of overweight and obesity, I sought out and was granted permission by the NIH and AHA to include large amounts of information they have already published for the purposes of educating both practitioners and patients. Most of the healthy eating and exercise tips contained in this text are geared for practitioners treating adult (not pediatric) weight loss and the prevention of weight gain. Though primarily written for practitioners, this book may also be read and used by patients being treated for overweight and obesity or those who simply seek a healthy lifestyle in general.

I have been in clinical practice in the natural health field since 1992. Before becoming a Chinese medical practitioner, I was a massage therapist for nearly a decade. Over the years, I have engaged in thousands of conversations with patients about wellness, health maintenance, diet, exercise, the mind-body connection, behavioral change, and more. Through these conversations, I have learned that such patient-practitioner dialogue supports and strengthens the effectiveness of treatment. Such conversations empower patients through education about their treatment and how they can engage as proactive participants in their healing and wellness. Happily, over the years, I have learned how to communicate the Chinese medical paradigm to Western patients. In fact, I do this so well that many of my patients begin to speak to me using Chinese medical terminology. They even know what Chinese medical patterns their herb formulas are treating. So when Blue Poppy asked me to write a practice manual on weight loss for acupuncturists and Chinese medical practitioners, I knew that I would write a book not just about which points and herbs to use for each pattern but also about how to treat the patient as a whole, how to communicate with them in a language they understand while teaching them to speak about themselves and their treatment in the language of Chinese medicine. It is my wish that this practice manual may be helpful to those in clinical practice who are trying to create a truly authentic and practical integrative healing partnership with their patients. May the information contained in this book inspire your practice no matter what the patient's main complaint and may this book serve as a tool for patient education and empowerment.

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