So...you want to be an Acupuncturist

Ask any acupuncturist why they chose to study Traditional Chinese Medicine and practice Acupuncture and certainly, 99% will say it was because they personally had such a good experience, they had to know how it worked! Many students and practitioners, themselves have had some kind of health issue and a really positive story of how acupuncture helped them get rid of lower back pain or migraines or helped them to conceive their longed for family. For some, it was a life changer.

Helping others to get well is another important aspect of why people choose to study Acupuncture and more people are seeing the value that acupuncture can bring, with over 2.3 million Acupuncture treatments undertaken during 2014, making it one of the most popular therapies.

Even Jeremy Hunt the health secretary, has called for Acupuncture to be more available through the NHS. It seems that the marriage of east and west health philosophies and modalities may finally be happening. Research carried out by Dr Daniel C Cherkin et al and published in the peer-reviewed medical journal *Archives of Internal Medicine*, showed that Acupuncture can improve the ability to function in people with chronic low back pain compared to usual care (which included medication and physical therapy). These are indeed exciting times for the profession.

Most Acupuncturists work part time hours and hold a general clinic, treating many type of conditions such as back pain, migraine, irritable bowel syndrome, depression - even helping overdue pregnant women go into a natural labour! The Chinese theory is applicable to any western pathology and the theory is interested in the production and movement of our body fluids in particular our "qi" (natural energy) and blood. How our energy moves and how it is spent are all of interest to Acupuncturists. Diet and nutrition play a large part in the lifestyle advice which compliments Acupuncture treatment. Teaching you how to live according to naturopath principles is part of the consultative approach and a part which is rigorously taught at CNM.

Having a good work life balance is one of the benefits practising as an Acupuncturist can deliver and many practitioners are able to juggle their family around their clinic and earn a decent income too. Helping people is one of the most rewarding aspects of the profession, seeing someone’s health improve or pain levels decrease gives a practitioner a real sense they are doing seeming worthwhile and contributes to a high level of job satisfaction.

The profession is supported by a couple of membership organisations:- the British Acupuncture Council (BAcC) and the Association of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture (ATCM) both which offer membership, support and guidance to the Acupuncture practitioner community.

It is quite difficult to find a career which allows such great flexibility in how many
hours you wish to work with a high level of job satisfaction an opportunity to "learn for life". Traditional Chinese Medicine has many other treatment modalities which can be learned as part of the CPD (continual professional development) requirement, such as Chinese herbs and Tui Na which is a form of Chinese massage, excellent for muscular skeletal injuries.

Our approach to acupuncture is to train students in a naturopathic background as well as concentrating more on the physical aspects of treatment rather than academia. We want to get you practising and have a strong practitioner development module which will teach you how to start up and stay in, practice.