‘Oprah Magazine’ Spotlights cosmetic acupuncture skills of NYC/Sherman physician

George Linkletter

If you doubt that the ancient Chinese practice of acupuncture is steadily gaining acceptance in the U.S., look no further than the June issue of Oprah Magazine, which spotlights the remarkable skills of a physician who practices cosmetic acupuncture in New York City during the week and in Sherman on the weekends.

Melinda Mingus, M.D., a New York City-based anesthesiologist who is also certified in a form of acupuncture called MeiZen (‘beautiful person’ in Chinese), is the lead example in a six-page feature article that examines a range of beauty products and procedures.

“When I initially received the message that Oprah Magazine had called and wanted to do a story on cosmetic acupuncture, I was a little skeptical,” recalls Dr. Mingus, who maintains an office in Sherman with Spiral Touch Therapies, just above the American Pie Restaurant in Sherman.

“At first I thought it might be a practical joke. But when I returned the call, I discovered it was bona fide. The editors wanted to experience a treatment first-hand so they could accurately report on the results.”

The deadline to complete the article was fast approaching. So Valerie Monroe, the magazine’s beauty director, decided to experience the treatment herself. However, she only had time for a single treatment. Dr. Mingus usually recommends a series of ten treatments over several weeks to assure optimum results.

Although they are called ‘needles,’ the sterilized, stainless steel devices used in acupuncture are really tiny pins, about the width of a human hair. Without their colorful plastic handles they are barely visible. And they are solid, not hollow like the needles used for injecting medications.
The needles work by triggering micro-trauma in the skin, which increases blood flow and the production of collagen and elastin, according to Dr. Mingus. “The treatments result in firmer skin, a reduction in wrinkles, and a tightening of the jowls,” she says. Dr. Mingus also points out that patients typically report a number of other healthy benefits, including improved digestion, more restful sleep, increased energy, and a general sense of improved overall wellness.

These ancillary benefits are not all unusual if you consider the fact that Dr. Mingus views and treats each patient from a total or holistic viewpoint – and conducts a thorough patient interview and examination prior to initiating any specific facial or cosmetic treatment.

“Many times other problems in the body, such as excessive fatigue or poor digestion, show up on the face. So treating just the face, without addressing the other possible root causes of the poor appearance, is just counter-productive,” she says.

In the case of Ms. Monroe, the beauty director for Oprah Magazine, that is exactly what happened. “Mingus needled other body parts (my hands, legs, feet, ears, and scalp) in order to stimulate various nerves,” Monroe told her readers in the article.

“She’s an extremely skilled acupuncturist; I couldn’t feel the needles going in. I lay still for about a half an hour, deeply relaxed,” she continued. “After I had been successfully de-needled, I examined my face in a 7X magnifying mirror for holes or red dots – I couldn’t find a single one. And my skin was glowing.”

Dr. Mingus reports an even mix of both male and female patients seek out her cosmetic acupuncture services. They typically range in age from about the mid-30s to the mid-60s. She also says a wide range of occupations are represented, such as legal, banking and real estate -- and certainly not just entertainment. “The common denominator seems to be anyone who deals with clients or the public and wants to project a more youthful and rested appearance,” she says.

Older patients can also benefit from cosmetic acupuncture, as can individuals who have undergone cosmetic surgery. Dr. Mingus cautions that the treatments may take a little longer, and the benefits might not be quite as pronounced. And there is always the possibility of uncovering another factors in the body that is contributing to the less-than-ideal facial appearance that might have otherwise gone unnoticed.

For more information, visit www.melindamingusmd.com.