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Biopuncture isn't pains and needles

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By Carly Q. Romalino

Biopuncture could be an intimidating medical term at first glance. But the nearly painless injection treatment offers an effective delivery method of natural medications to patients who have prickly problems like sports injuries, musculoskeletal issues, and colds and flus.

"It offers people a very safe, natural and effective way of treating these disorders without the use of steroids," said Dr. Robert Davis, a 20-year South Jersey family medicine practitioner.

Davis, and colleague Dr. Polina Karmazin, who have a practice in Voorhees Township, are among the very few doctors in the South Jersey and Philadelphia area who offer biopuncture. Although the method is not widely used in the area, Davis said the technique has been refined in last five years since the federal Food and Drug Administration began regulating homeopathic medicines. Homeopathic medicines are nothing more than a dilution of natural substances, and are painless and typically come without side effects or interactions with other drugs, the doctors said.

"We have known now for several years that prescription versions of ibuprofen, those increase the risk of heart disease and stroke, and damage kidney and liver, and steroids offer a multitude of side effects," said Davis.

Ibuprofen, and other similar drugs, work well to reduce painful inflammation for patients with musculoskeletal issues, but Davis said the drugs just mask the symptoms instead of promoting healing.

The natural medications, which are injected with very small needles into acupuncture points, help pump up the body's ability to heal itself.

"We're really promoting our natural body's processes to regulate themselves and promote that natural healing. You're not just suppressing symptoms," Davis said. "That's the whole point of what we're doing."

Even if the benefits sound great, it's the needle, for some patients that might be the deal breaker on the procedure. But Davis and Karmazin said it's less frightening than most people think.

"A lot of people are used to hearing about the cortisone shots. I assure (my patients) that it will not be as painful as that, and it's an easier technique, from a patient standpoint, to tolerate," said Karmazin, who has been practicing medicine for more than 21½ decades.

The needles are much thinner than the ones used to take blood, and combined with a pinching technique, the doctors said, insertion is painless.

"We usually don't have to go in as deep as we normally would with other injections," said Davis, who has used biopuncture on patients suffering with tennis elbow, irritable bowel syndrome, asthma, headaches and allergies. "The technique we use - a pinching technique of the skin - it eliminates most of the pain that people would anticipate."

The procedure, which is not covered by most medical insurance plans, is available at **Davis and Karmazin's Voorhees practice located at 701 Cooper Road in Voorhees.**