IJBPAS, May, 2026, 15(5): 2350-2357

ISSN: 2277–4998

International Journal of Biology, Pharmacy and Allied Sciences (IJBPAS)

'A Bridge Between Laboratory and Reader'

www.ijbpas.com

PLANT ACUPUNCTURE IN PLANT AND HUMAN HEALTH: A NARRATIVE REVIEW

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Received 16th April 2025; Revised 15th May 2025; Accepted 1st Aug. 2025; Available online 1st May 2026

https://doi.org/10.31032/IJBPAS/2026/15.5.10173

ABSTRACT

The present narrative review gives an insight into a 'new' medium of plant acupuncture, a unique integration of age-old healing wisdom and one of newly emerging therapeutic technologies. These ancient systems, such as Traditional Chinese Medicine and Ayurveda, recognize plants as living beings which engage with human energies. This article assesses the theoretical basis of energy medicine in that plants are supposed to activate energy points on the body akin to conventional acupuncture due to a unique quality such as smell or biochemical substances. Several forms of practice are stated, including placement of medicinal plants on acupoints for energizing properties. Important piercing sites on a plant include leaf nodes, flower buds, stems, roots, and seeds. Research now emerging concentrates much on biological action from acupuncture on plant growth, a phenomenon that reflects on the interdependence of natural systems in this world. The review draws attention to the necessity for solid scientific inquiry to establish plant acupuncture's efficacy and mechanisms within integrative health frameworks. The concept of introducing acupuncture needles in human after energising from the plant should gain importance in the future. The fear of sterilising the needle always hinder transfer of energy. Finally, this review will highlight the important need to integrate ancient wisdom with modern health practices in the future

Keywords: acupuncture, plant, energy, health, human

INTRODUCTION

Plant acupuncture has gained popularity in the ever-changing field of alternative medicine due to its ability to combine ancient knowledge with modern treatment approaches. This unique approach, which is often ignored and underutilized, introduces the concept of stimulating certain plant parts to encourage healing and improved growth, much like traditional acupuncture does in the human body with needle stimulation. The cultivation and application of medicinal plants, along with acupuncture principles, creates a ground for inquiry in this complex field of alternative treatment.

Understanding the relationships between botany, energy medicine, and indigenous therapies is critical for both practitioners and scholars. The fundamental theory is closely consistent with the idea that everything in nature contains energy that can interact with human energy fields **[1, 2]**. The purpose of this narrative review is to analyze plant acupuncture's theoretical foundations, practices, and prospective ramifications in comprehensive medical treatment.

Historical Context and Traditional Wisdom

Plant acupuncture has its roots in ancient healing traditions that stressed the connection between humans and nature. Early practitioners in diverse cultures knew that plants were more than just medicines; they were living beings capable of interacting at various levels of awareness. Plants have been employed in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and Ayurveda not just for therapeutic purposes, but also to balance the body's energy flow.

Ancient texts reveal that practitioners would often seek specific plants corresponding to the meridian systems, similar to the acupoints in acupuncture. These plants were used in rituals, poultices, or teas to facilitate healing and promote harmony **[3]**. Much of this wisdom has been passed down through generations, often in oral tradition, emphasizing the sacred connection between people and plants. In rural communities, where botany and spirituality intertwine, plant acupuncture often takes form through local practices without much scientific evidence.

Theoretical Framework Underpinning Plant Acupuncture

The concept of plant acupuncture is based on the concepts of energy medicine, which suggest that the human body is a network of energy channels. Plants operate as conductors inside the meridian system, releasing blockages and restoring balance in the same way that acupuncture needles do. Plants' unique qualities, whether through aroma, structure, or chemical composition, can trigger or resonate with specific acupressure sites.

Emerging research in bioenergetics supports the idea that living systems emit vibrational frequencies, allowing for interaction with their environment. Plant acupuncture practitioners might use specific parts of a plant—such as leaves, flowers, or roots—placed strategically on the body to harmonize energy and stimulate physical, emotional, and spiritual healing. Each plant, with its particular energy signature, after acupuncture with increased energy can be transformed to human with different aspects of health and disease thus creating cure and healing that transcends cultural barriers **[4]**.

Practical Approaches to Plant Acupuncture

The practice of plant acupuncture can be approached through various methods. One common technique involves the arrangement of medicinal plants in close proximity to acupoints, allowing for the plants' energy to interact directly with the human body's energetic field **[3]**. This can be facilitated through various modalities such as needling at specific points and keeping for an hour or two.

Botanical essences and hydrosols are also gaining popularity within the field, offering a more concentrated form of plant energy. Practitioners may create specific blends aimed at addressing particular health concerns, using their knowledge of herbal properties alongside their understanding of acupuncture theory. Additionally, many practitioners emphasize the importance of intuition and personal connection with the plants, encouraging a different approach to treatment that honours both the healer's and the patient's unique experiences.

In the realm of plant acupuncture, "puncturing" refers to specific locations on plants—often referred to as "needling points"—where practitioners can extract energy or essence to facilitate healing. While traditional acupuncture focuses on points on the human body, plant acupuncture involves identifying optimal areas on the plant itself to harness its therapeutic properties **[5]**. Here are key points to consider when puncturing or harvesting plants for acupuncture purposes:

1. Leaf Nodes

Leaf nodes, where leaves attach to the stem, are critical points for puncturing. These areas are vital in plant growth and vitality and often contain concentrated essential oils and other bioactive compounds **[6]**. For example, puncturing the leaves of Peppermint (Mentha piperita) at the nodes can release its invigorating aroma and menthol properties, which may enhance mental clarity and relieve headaches if used in humans after energising with the plant points **(Figure 1)**.

Figure 1: Needles in plants

2. Flower Buds

The flower buds of certain plants are rich in therapeutic properties, often containing potent essential oils and active compounds. For instance, Lavender (Lavandula spp.) flower buds can be punctured or harvested to release their calming scent and relax the nervous system **[7]**. Using the essence of these buds near corresponding acupoints can promote emotional well-being and alleviate stress.

3. Stem or Stem Sections

The stems of plants can also be important puncture points. For example, the inner bark of certain trees, like Cinnamon (*Cinnamomum verum*), can be harvested for its warming and digestive benefits **[8]**. Any stem at the junction of a new branch can be pricked for growth of the plant also. Treating patients near relevant acupoints using tinctures derived from the stem can enhance circulation and metabolism **(Figure 2)**.

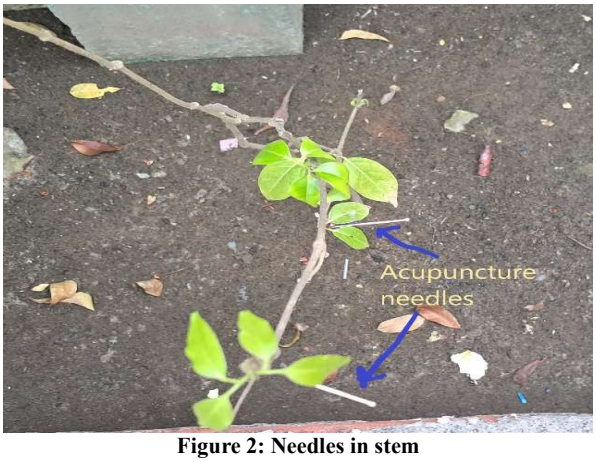

Figure 2: Needles in stem

4. Roots and Rhizomes

Roots and rhizomes contain concentrated energy and nutrients essential for a plant's life force. For example, Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) root **[9]** can be punctured to extract its warming properties, subsequently applying extracts to points like ST36 (Zusanli) to aid digestion.

5. Fruits and Seeds

Some plants provide healing qualities through their fruits and seeds. For example, puncturing the seed pods of Coriander (*Coriandrum sativum*) **[10]** can release their essential oils, which may be used for digestive health. Applying these energetically charged seeds to acupoints of can enhance treatment effects and contribute to overall well-being. Enhancement of seed quality can be done by acupuncture **(Figure 3)**.

Figure 3: Needles in fruit to enhance seed quality

In *Phaseolus vulgaris* experiments, acupuncture on unifoliolate buds had a marked promotion of plant growth **[3, 11]**. Acupuncture raised net photosynthesis by 20.5%, transpiration by 27.2%, internode elongation by 22.5%, and total shoot dry weight by 22.9% over controls. Treated plants also flowered three days sooner and yielded 14.4% more fruit.

In a random study, among two Tulasi plants, one was given regular acupuncture which grew and branched better **(Figure 4)**.

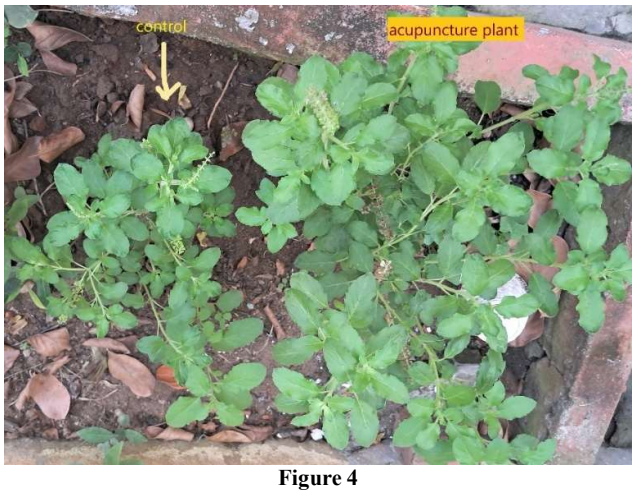

Figure 4

Acupuncture in human treats successfully nerve, endocrine, and immune disorders by mechanisms including anti-inflammatory properties, decrease in oxidative stress, cell apoptosis inhibition, and stimulation of proliferation and differentiation of stem

cells **[12]**. Studies confirm that acupuncture improves the proliferation, differentiation, homing, and survival of endogenous and exogenous stem cells, particularly when used together with traditional Chinese medicine **[13, 14]**. Our approach is to have the needles energised and then initiate acupuncture in humans.

Implications and Future Directions in Research

While plant acupuncture is rooted deeply in traditional practices, it also presents ample opportunities for future research and clinical applications. The growing interest in integrative medicine offers a platform for scientifically exploring the efficacy of plant acupuncture in various health contexts. Rigorous studies and clinical trials could help elucidate the underlying mechanisms, offering evidence-based support for its practitioners and legitimacy within the broader medical community.

Moreover, as ecological awareness heightens, the practice of plant acupuncture presents a critical discourse on sustainability and the importance of preserving native plants and traditional knowledge. As we confront an increasingly urbanized world, the revival of such ancient practices could bridge the gap between holistic health and environmental consciousness, encouraging a deeper respect for the plants that nourish our bodies and spirits.

Limitations: A few statements mentioned in the articles have no references, but they are stated by virtue of author's vast experience of thirty years in human and plant acupuncture. There are some fears about the danger of absent sterilization of needles after plant acupuncture getting introduced to human beings. Recently, we did use only silver acupuncture sterile disposable needles as similar to human acupuncture. But earlier reusable copper needles were used.

Conclusion:

Plant acupuncture, with its rich historical context and promising future, stands at the intersection of nature, consciousness, and healing. It's possible to stimulate growth, flower better with acupuncture at selected points. Additional advantage is that the acupuncture needles after being used in plants can be used in human for transferring energy at precise points to improve health and disease.

In a world where disconnection from natural ecosystems has become a normative experience, the embodied practice of plant acupuncture not only offers a pathway to individual healing but invites us to reconnect the green world around us. The journey of exploration within plant acupuncture is not merely a venture into the past; it is a vision for a future where healing arts and nature coalesce for holistic well-being. The exploration of this method pushes us to a deeper understanding of our

interdependence with nature, promising a more integrated approach to positive health.

Conflict of Interest: None

Author's Contribution: Both the authors have significantly contributed

Funding: There is no external financial aid

Acknowledgements*:* Our acknowledgements to the doyen of acupuncture, my mentor, Late **Sir Dr. Anton Jayasuriya** who pioneered plant acupuncture.

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