

# About Integrative Medicine

A GUIDE TO SELF-CARE AND SUPPORT | SUMMER 2017



**Jun J Mao, MD, MSCE**  
Chief, Integrative Medicine Service

## Chief's Note

In this issue of *About Integrative Medicine*, we highlight our efforts to improve patient outcomes through research, clinical care, and educational programs. Discover how clinician Robin Hardbatttle uses martial arts and meditation to teach some of our youngest patients to manage their stress during treatment; join our upcoming programs — including a new mindfulness-based stress reduction course; learn about the wonders of turmeric; and explore our latest research study on acupuncture for the treatment of chronic pain.

Be well!

## Finding PEACE with Chronic Pain

By Lauren DeMarzo

*MSK researchers are beginning one of the country's largest clinical trials to compare two types of acupuncture for the treatment of chronic musculoskeletal pain.*

Nearly half of all cancer patients live with pain. For some, this pain is short-lived, but for others, it becomes a burdensome, persistent part of their daily lives. Many rely on prescription medications, but often these remedies do not offer complete relief and may bring about new unwanted side effects such as constipation, dizziness, and fatigue.

A new study from MSK's Integrative Medicine Service offers new hope for this challenging problem. The **Personalized Electro-acupuncture vs. Auricular acupuncture Comparative Effectiveness — or PEACE** — study will examine treatment of chronic musculoskeletal pain, a persistent or occasional pain in the muscles, joints, and/or bones that lasts for three or more months.

## HEALTH FACTS ABOUT CHRONIC PAIN

### PAIN IS COMMON

- Pain is the **#1 reason** Americans seek medical care.
- Chronic pain is the **most common** cause of long-term disability

### PAIN IS COSTLY

**\$635 billion** = the estimated cost to the U.S. economy due to treatment expenses and losses to the workforce.



### PAIN IS PERSONAL

Clinical research has led to **more discoveries** of differences in pain perceptions, leading to an increased need for **personalized treatments**.

### ACUPUNCTURE MAY HELP

Memorial Sloan Kettering's PEACE study will compare electro-acupuncture and auricular acupuncture to usual care for treatment of chronic musculoskeletal pain.



### QUALITY OF LIFE

Pain is often accompanied by fatigue, anxiety, sleep disturbance, and depression. The **PEACE study** will also determine which type of acupuncture is better for treatment of these associated symptoms.

Source: NIH Fact Sheet: Pain Management, March 2013

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Staff Spotlight: Talking with Robin Hardbatttle

By Christina Seluzicki



Robin Hardbatttle, MS LAc, is a Mind-Body Instructor with 25 years of experience. He joined MSK in 2012 to teach martial arts and meditation as part of the Pediatric Mind-

Body Fitness Program. Robin also leads meditation sessions for adult inpatients, and qigong and tai chi classes for adults at the Bendheim Integrative Medicine Center.

### Why does MSK offer martial arts to kids in the hospital?

Using martial arts in a hospital setting may seem unusual for kids with cancer. However, this is a rich and multi-layered discipline that, with appropriate adaptation, is well suited to address the physical and emotional needs of children in pain.

### What are some of the biggest challenges they face?

Pain, anxiety, and fear, especially since many younger patients have yet to develop the coping skills needed to

deal with these challenges. For children without support, painful and distressing procedures can easily turn into traumatic lifelong memories.

### How do you use martial arts to teach them coping skills?

I adapt appropriate techniques and apply them to each child's specific circumstances. In addition to developing strength, balance, and coordination, these activities help reduce anxiety and pain, improve sleep, serve as an emotional release, and provide patients with a sense of strength. Our

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## Upcoming Events & Classes

To register and receive information about meditation classes, call **646-888-0800**.

### Online Meditation 101

Learn the basics of meditation from the convenience of your home with our online Meditation 101 class. Over six weeks, explore meditation and guided imagery for controlling stress and building resilience.

Sundays at 11:00 AM starting September 24th  
Thursdays at 6:30 PM starting November 9th

This class is held online. You will need a computer and a phone, tablet, or smartphone to participate.

### Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Starts in September

Discover mindfulness practices to improve your daily life. As part of a supportive group, you will establish a daily meditation practice, develop alternative responses to stress, and cope with the effects of treatment.

Mondays from 12:30 PM to 3:00 PM starting September 11th

Bendheim Integrative Medicine Center  
1429 First Avenue at East 74th Street  
10 classes, including one Saturday retreat

### Cancer Smart Focus on Integrative Medicine: Treatments for Mind, Body, and Spirit

Join us for a very special interactive event with Memorial Sloan Kettering experts who will discuss and demonstrate how acupuncture, massage, meditation, and exercise can boost your well-being and support you in managing your pain. Attend in person or watch via Facebook Live or webcast.

Tuesday, September 26th  
7:00 PM – 8:00 PM  
Zuckerman Research Center Auditorium  
417 East 68th Street, New York, NY 10065

To register and receive information about future discussions, visit us at [www.cancersmart.org](http://www.cancersmart.org) or call **212-639-3074**.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

## Finding PEACE

**“We are thrilled to be able to offer this novel comparative effectiveness study to our patients to provide them with more personalized options for treatment of their chronic pain.”**

**Dr. Jun Mao**  
Chief of the Integrative Medicine Service and study principal investigator

To learn more about the Integrative Medicine PEACE trial and determine your eligibility, email [medpeacestudy@mskcc.org](mailto:medpeacestudy@mskcc.org). ■



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

## Robin Hardbattle

sessions also lay the groundwork for a child to develop mind-body practices. For example, when I have a child work out his or her frustration with a focus mitt, we incorporate simple breathing exercises — an ideal way to introduce mindful breathing. In the short term, martial arts and mindfulness help with acute issues of anxiety, fear, and pain. In the long term, these skills become tools throughout life.

### How do you introduce meditation to young people and what are its effects?

Guided imagery is an ideal way to introduce children to meditation and is possible with patients as young as three years old. Even in the busy environment of a pediatric day hospital, patients can achieve a deep state of relaxation. Through guided imagery, the child can reclaim a sense of control in an environment where they have little or no control. They can close their eyes and *go home*. ■

## ABOUT HERBS FEATURE OF THE MONTH Turmeric

By Jyothirmai Gubili

Turmeric is a perennial herb with a medicinal history that dates back 5,000 years. It is used in traditional medicine for wound healing and to treat infections and stomach ailments. The powdered rhizome (rootstocks from the turmeric plant) is used as a spice in many cuisines, and as a coloring agent in food and cosmetics.

There are many active substances in turmeric, but curcumin is the most studied. In laboratory studies, it was shown to have anti-inflammatory

effects, as well as to protect nerve cells and help prevent or delay the development of cancer. In patients with colorectal cancer, curcumin

given during the pre-surgery waiting period improved

cachexia (a condition involving rapid loss of weight and muscle) and general health of patients. In other trials, curcumin was shown to be safe when given along with docetaxel and gemcitabine, two commonly used chemotherapy drugs. However, due to poor absorption and rapid metabolism, high doses of curcumin are needed to observe the effects.

Clinical studies indicate that turmeric may help reduce the symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome and ulcerative colitis. It was also found to be safe, with effects comparable to a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug, for the treatment of osteoarthritis of the knee. Additional findings suggest benefits of a topical turmeric-based cream in reducing dermatitis (inflammation of the skin) induced by radiotherapy in patients with head and neck cancer. Larger trials are needed to confirm these findings. ■

**Bendheim Integrative Medicine Center**  
1429 First Avenue at East 74th Street  
Appointments: 646-888-0800  
[www.mskcc.org/integrativemedicine](http://www.mskcc.org/integrativemedicine)

Integrative Medicine offers classes and self-care videos on yoga, tai chi, qigong, and meditation to help you discover the practice that is right for you. For a copy of our current class schedule and links to our video library, go to our website.