

Sandro Graca – Abstract

Patients increasingly seek for acupuncture as part of their multidisciplinary treatment strategies and in the last two decades, research into acupuncture as a medical treatment increased at twice the rate of research in biomedicine, meaning that we now know more about acupuncture than ever before! Consequently, there are now over nine thousand positive recommendations for acupuncture from almost four thousand different publications, resulting in thousands of acupuncture recommendations and inclusion in clinical guidelines for integrative care, as seen recently for cancer pain in the USA. Once seen as buzzwords, “integrative medicine” and “patient centred care” are now fundamental pillars for medical care.

Acupuncturists with a strong evidence-informed knowledge are now at the forefront of delivering such integrative care, many in multidisciplinary teams already working in hospitals. In our day-to-day clinical practice, we adapt the knowledge from the Classics with the most up-to-date acupuncture research findings, and combined with our experience, we provide a treatment that works for our patients in the real world. Consequently, our pragmatic acupuncture treatments also help to develop research design, for example modifying the Paulus protocol for current IVF treatments, and influencing point selection and dosage for the management of PCOS symptoms.

The objective of this lecture is to equip practitioners with the latest strategies for both acupuncture treatment and implementation within integrative menstrual and reproductive health. In recent years, research work in polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), dysmenorrhoea, and IVF highlighted the central role of acupuncture dosage, including number of treatments, their timing in relation to the menstrual cycle or the fertility schedule itself, and the points used. This includes aspects such as rationale for point selection, practitioner’s training, and needle stimulation, for example electroacupuncture or photobiomodulation. This knowledge will support your evidence-informed practice and promote practice-informed research, contributing towards writing tomorrow’s classics.