

Acupuncture for your pets

Veterinary acupuncture is probably over 2000 years old and the oldest book on acupuncture was probably written about 300BC! This makes it the oldest medical textbook in existence. When the first veterinary schools were started in Europe acupuncture was on the curriculum and was widely practised in both large and small animal medicine until the early 19th century. Advances in veterinary medicine then rendered acupuncture obsolete until the last few decades when veterinary surgeons have used acupuncture with success.

Acupuncture is a very useful method of pain relief and has been found to increase the animal's own resistance to disease. It may be used solely as a method of treatment or alongside conventional treatments (hence the preferred term is to describe it as a "complementary" therapy rather than an "alternative" one).

Acupuncture is based upon the Chinese philosophy that everything in the world is in a constant state of flux and change but there are now soundly based scientific explanations for the effects of acupuncture, some being well researched and others for which there is just some evidence. These mechanisms involve endorphin stimulation, pain-gate activity, cutaneo-visceral reflexes and electromagnetic activity (ie they revolve around the functions of the nervous system).