



PROVIDED BY JULIE RAE

Acupuncturist Julie Rae operates an Oriental therapy practice in Litchfield Park.

Oriental therapies gaining popularity

Poised to capture the growth of the West Valley, Julie Rae recently opened an Oriental medicine practice in Litchfield Park.

Rae also serves as a clinic supervisor at the Phoenix Institute of Herbal Medicine and Acupuncture.

She says she started looking into alternative therapies about 20 years ago, when she began suffering from allergies. At the time, she was living in Boulder, Colo., which is known as a healing mecca. She says she tried acupuncture as a last resort and had "miraculous results."

About 12 years ago, she decided to leave her job as a hairdresser and change careers. She graduated in 2000 from the Colorado School of Traditional Chinese Medicine and went into private practice, using acupuncture, Chinese herbs and cupping.

Actress Gwyneth Paltrow brought cupping into the limelight in 2004 when she showed up for a New York film premiere wearing a shirt that revealed large, circular bruises all over her back.

While cupping has been used for thousands of years to treat disease and pain, many people had not heard of the procedure before Paltrow's pictures were splashed all over the media. The process involves heating glass cups and placing them on the skin to remove toxicity in the body.

The idea behind acupuncture and cupping is to access the chi in the body.

"There is no literal translation for 'chi,'" Rae says. "We describe it as energy or life force in the body. It travels through the body with the blood." She says it's the energy that makes the blood circulate through the body.

"In Chinese medicine, where there's pain, there's stagnation, when the chi and blood are not flowing," Rae says. "That's why acupuncture is so effective in treating pain: It disperses that chi."

She recommends that patients take Chinese herbal formulas in conjunction with acupuncture.

Depending on their needs, Rae creates custom herbal prescriptions for her patients.

As China faces criticism and distrust from the American public because of several recent food scares, Rae says she is not nervous about the quality of the herbs coming from that country.

"I use the highest-quality herbs I can buy," she says. "I use granular herbs rather than raw herbs to make my custom formulas. If anybody questions that, I just explain to them the companies I use are of the highest quality."

Many of her patients come to Rae as a last resort.

"It's very fulfilling when you see someone who has been suffering, to see the pain release and see them be able to go back to living their life," she says. "Their personality changes because they're not in constant pain."