

## Group acupuncture

### **Does your pet struggle to get up, go for walks, climb stairs, or do you find your pet loses energy in winter?**

As the weather gets colder and damper, many older pets experience significant pain and discomfort in winter. There are many options to help our pets feel more comfortable in cold weather, including cartrophen injections, glucosamine supplements, fish oil supplements, non-steroidal anti-inflammatories, and acupuncture. Princes Highway Veterinary Hospital is pleased to introduce a trial of group acupuncture treatments for our patients this winter.

#### **What is acupuncture and how does it work?**

Acupuncture is one of the oldest forms of veterinary medicine in the world. Patients are treated with tiny stainless steel needles (single use) at strategically picked acupuncture points to effect changes in the body without the use of drugs or medications. Needles are normally left in place for 20-30 minutes and then removed. In China, animals have been treated with acupuncture for over 3000 years. Acupuncture works in much the same way in animals as it does in people. Acupuncture has also been shown to stimulate the release of neurochemicals including endorphins and other pain relieving, anti-inflammatory hormones into the bloodstream. From an energy perspective it is likely that acupuncture also works by facilitating the flow of electromagnetic energy through the body and removes blockages from the body.

#### **How do animals feel when they have acupuncture? Does it hurt?**

One of the most common concerns that people have about acupuncture on their pets is the 'ouch' factor. Cats and dogs can be a little apprehensive at first but they very quickly relax, becoming calm and even falling asleep. Most animals come back the next time, quite content to stand, lie down or be held by their owner and be treated. However, there are a small number of patients who do not tolerate acupuncture needles, but may happily accept laser acupuncture or acupressure massage.

#### **What conditions can be treated with acupuncture?**

Acupuncture is perhaps best known for its use in pain relief for osteoarthritis patients. It can be used as a primary treatment, or in conjunction with other treatments like non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (pain killers). Acupuncture relieves pain, reduces muscle spasms, improves circulation, reduces swelling, improves healing, improves energy and appetite, and helps pets feel more comfortable.

Most animals with osteoarthritis greatly benefit from acupuncture treatments in winter. Some pets may need regular acupuncture treatments sometimes as often as weekly or fortnightly. In addition to osteoarthritis, acupuncture can help pets with vomiting, diarrhoea, seizures, neurological problems, heart problems, cancer, poor immune systems, kidney failure, metabolic disease, coughing, urinary problems and many other conditions.

#### **Group acupuncture**

Group acupuncture has been available for human patients in Asia for many generations. The acupuncturist moves around the room treating several patients at a time. Apart from the initial patient examination, inserting needles and removing them, it is not necessary for the vet to be with a patient all the time. Group acupuncture allows the acupuncturist to treat more patients while waiting for the needles to "cook", and also keeps the fees affordable for patients that need acupuncture frequently. Each session (including examination and treatment) is expected to last for 30-40 minutes, which is approximately double the time of a standard consultation. Group acupuncture is ideal for patients that have had acupuncture before, and need second or subsequent treatments. Special arrangement can be made for initial consultations (full history taking and comprehensive traditional Chinese medicine exam) for animals that have not had acupuncture before.

We are excited to introduce group acupuncture at Princes Highway Veterinary Hospital on Tuesdays in May and June. Acupuncture treatments will be given by Dr Yen Wong, our locum vet who is certified with the International Veterinary Acupuncture Society. Please give us a call on 95882088 or email [vet@highwayvet.com.au](mailto:vet@highwayvet.com.au) to make an appointment.

