



Using Acupuncture and Palliative care strategies for  
improving home care and mobility in geriatric patients

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# Acupuncture

## - what is this Voodoo Medicine



## Acupuncture

- is the insertion of very fine, filiform needles through the skin at specific points on the body with the intention of manipulating Qi.
- based upon the jing luo channel network theory of the circulation of Qi
  - Qi permeates every part of the body
    - it tends to collect and travel along channels called "jing luo."
      - jing luo channel system connects all aspects of the body together into one network of energetic communication
    - These are the "meridians" of acupuncture

Qi flows through the body and collects in the small hollows and depressions of the body to form pools of Qi.

- "pools of Qi" are places where Qi is concentrated and more accessible
  - these are called acupuncture points-where Qi can be accessed and manipulated
    - finger pressure (acupressure),
    - massage techniques (tui na; literally "pinch and pull"),
    - dermal friction (gua sha),
    - cupping,
    - moxibustion
    - acupuncture

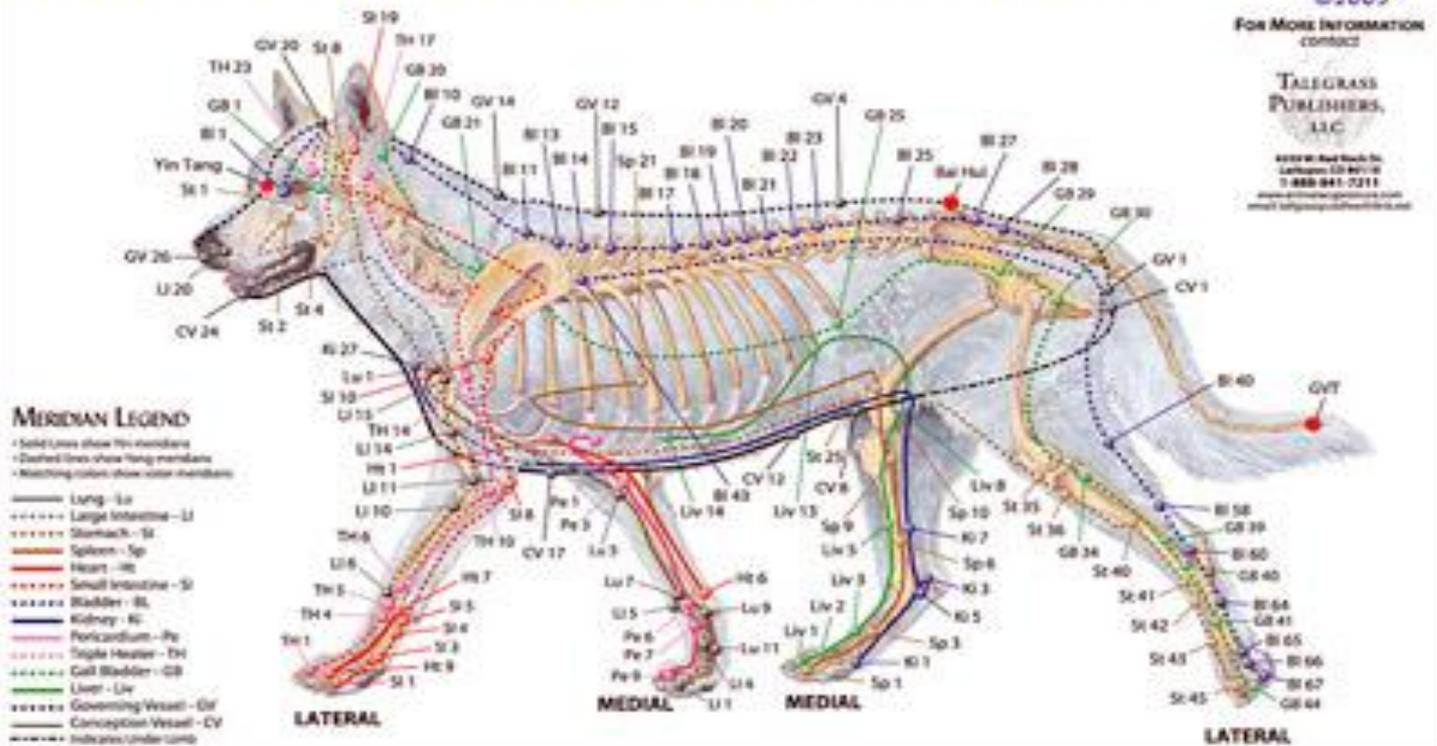
# CANINE ACUPRESSURE MERIDIAN CHART

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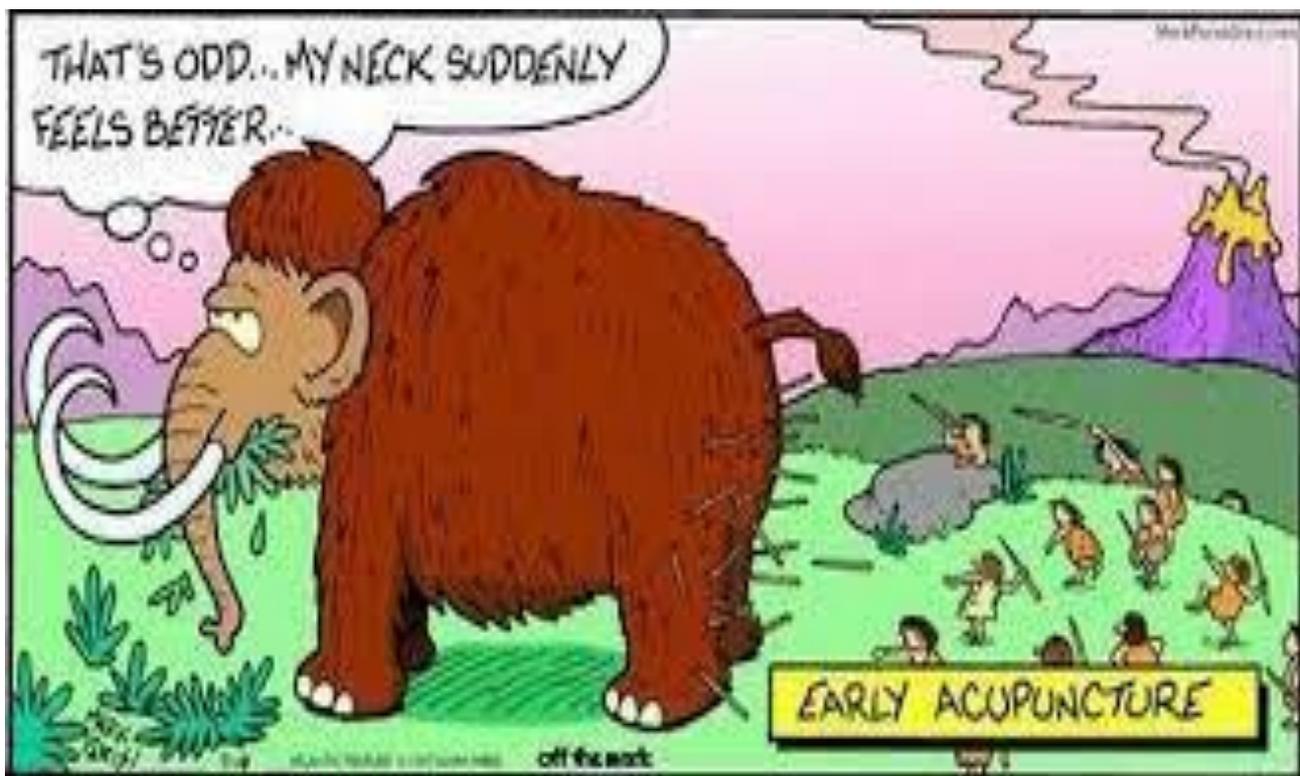
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What does it do?

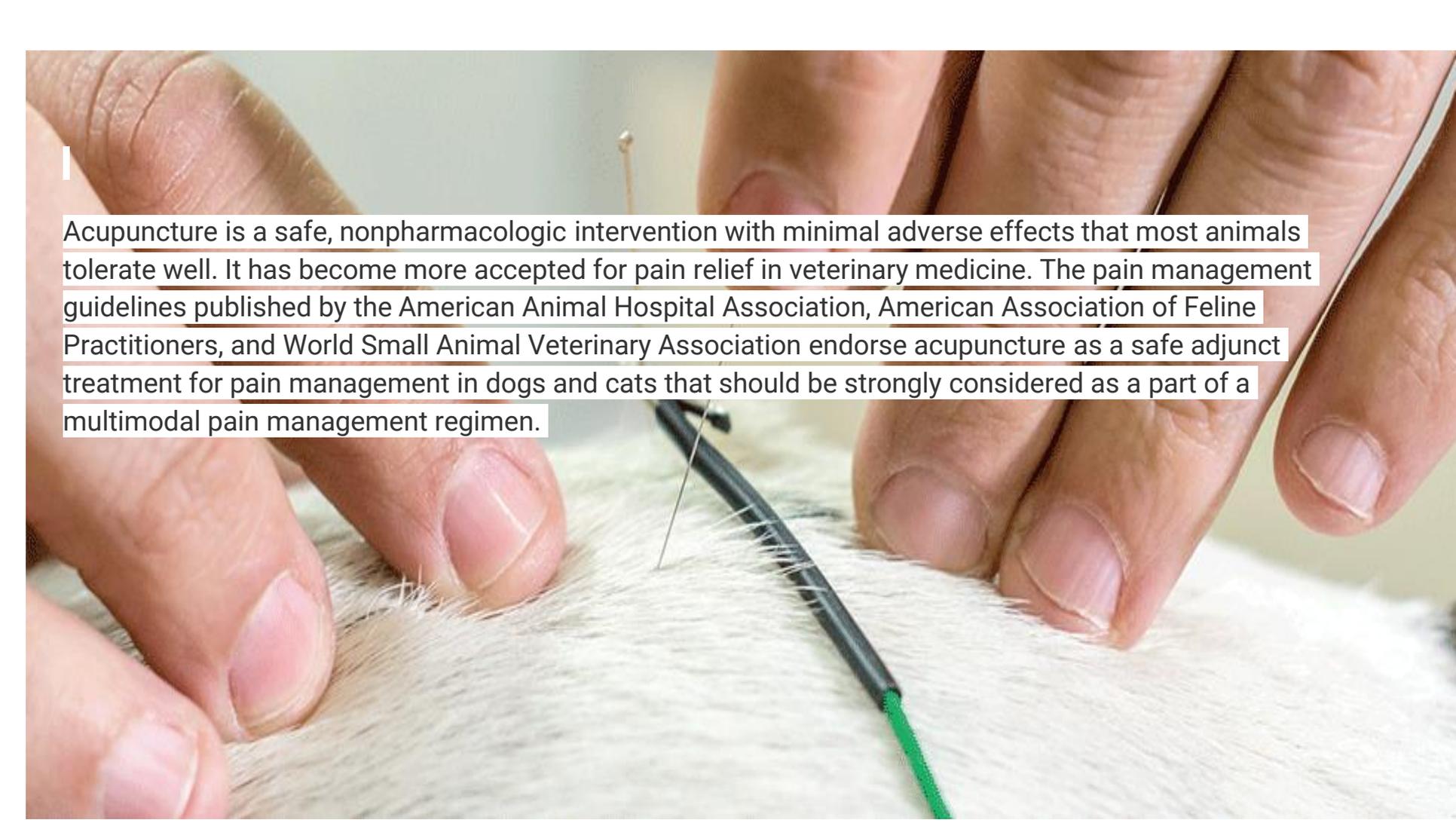
- Stimulates the release of endorphins, which are the body's natural pain relievers, and anti-inflammatory substances.
- The process of acupuncture creates elevated blood flow and increased oxygenation as well as improved metabolic and toxic waste removal.
- The needle insertion site benefits from localized pain relief due to the relaxation of the muscles in that area.



THAT'S ODD... MY NECK SUDDENLY FEELS BETTER...

EARLY ACUPUNCTURE

off the wall



Acupuncture is a safe, nonpharmacologic intervention with minimal adverse effects that most animals tolerate well. It has become more accepted for pain relief in veterinary medicine. The pain management guidelines published by the American Animal Hospital Association, American Association of Feline Practitioners, and World Small Animal Veterinary Association endorse acupuncture as a safe adjunct treatment for pain management in dogs and cats that should be strongly considered as a part of a multimodal pain management regimen.

# The Science

Acupuncture is the stimulation of certain points on the body that correspond to neurovascular bundles, blood plexuses, sites of nerve branching, and motor endplate zones.

- evidence suggests that the effects of acupuncture are likely mediated by the nervous system at peripheral, spinal, and supraspinal levels.
- Neurophysiologic effects of analgesia in response to acupoint stimulation include release of endogenous opioids and neurotransmitters (e.g., endorphin/endomorphin, enkephalin, 5-hydroxytryptamine), activation of the descending pain inhibitory pathway, and inhibition of inflammatory mediators (e.g., cyclooxygenase-2, interleukin-1 $\beta$ , interleukin-6).
- Acupuncture also causes micro-trauma and vasodilation to improve local circulation and catalyze healing. Evidence suggests inhibition of microglial activation by acupuncture may play a key role in neuropathic pain diseases.

# Who can we help?

## Patient selection

Species- dogs, cats, ferrets, guinea pigs, chinchillas

## Diagnosis based

Oncology patients- adjunct care or end of life care

Chronic DJD

IVDD- acute and chronic

Neurologic dz

-seizures, vestibular disease, GME

Musculoskeletal conditions

Types of acupuncture:

Dry needle

Aqua acupuncture- b12, saline, patient's blood

Electroacupuncture

# Setting expectations and measuring progress

Initial consult is one hour

What are their goals for the pet?

Are those SMART?

S-specific

M-measurable

A-achievable

R-realistic

T-time sensitive

Date \_\_\_\_\_

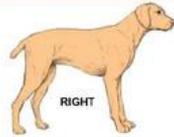
Time \_\_\_\_\_



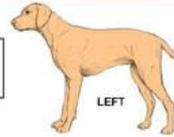
**Colorado State University  
Veterinary Medical Center  
Canine Acute Pain Scale**

Rescore when awake  Animal is sleeping, but can be aroused - Not evaluated for pain  
 Animal can't be aroused, check vital signs, assess therapy

Pain Score	Example	Psychological & Behavioral	Response to Palpation	Body Tension
0		<input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable when resting <input type="checkbox"/> Happy, content <input type="checkbox"/> Not bothering wound or surgery site <input type="checkbox"/> Interested in or curious about surroundings	<input type="checkbox"/> Nontender to palpation of wound or surgery site, or to palpation elsewhere	Minimal
1		<input type="checkbox"/> Content to slightly unsettled or restless <input type="checkbox"/> Distracted easily by surroundings	<input type="checkbox"/> Reacts to palpation of wound, surgery site, or other body part by looking around, flinching, or whimpering	Mild
2		<input type="checkbox"/> Looks uncomfortable when resting <input type="checkbox"/> May whimper or cry and may lick or rub wound or surgery site when unattended <input type="checkbox"/> Droopy ears, worried facial expression (arched eye brows, claring eyes) <input type="checkbox"/> Reluctant to respond when beckoned <input type="checkbox"/> Not eager to interact with people or surroundings but will look around to see what is going on	<input type="checkbox"/> Flinches, whimpers cries, or guards/pulls away	Mild to Moderate <b>Reassess analgesic plan</b>
3		<input type="checkbox"/> Unsettled, crying, groaning, biting or chewing wound when unattended <input type="checkbox"/> Guards or protects wound or surgery site by altering weight distribution (i.e., limping, shifting body position) <input type="checkbox"/> May be unwilling to move all or part of body	<input type="checkbox"/> May be subtle (shifting eyes or increased respiratory rate) if dog is too painful to move or is stoic <input type="checkbox"/> May be dramatic, such as a sharp cry, growl, bite or bite threat, and/or pulling away	Moderate <b>Reassess analgesic plan</b>
4		<input type="checkbox"/> Constantly groaning or screaming when unattended <input type="checkbox"/> May bite or chew at wound, but unlikely to move <input type="checkbox"/> Potentially unresponsive to surroundings <input type="checkbox"/> Difficult to distract from pain	<input type="checkbox"/> Cries at non-painful palpation (may be experiencing allodynia, wind-up, or fearful that pain could be made worse) <input type="checkbox"/> May react aggressively to palpation	Moderate to Severe <b>May be rigid to avoid painful movement</b> <b>Reassess analgesic plan</b>



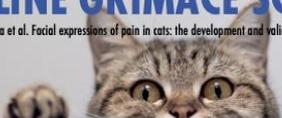
○ Tender to palpation  
 X Warm  
 ■ Tense



Comments \_\_\_\_\_

# FELINE GRIMACE SCALE FACT SHEET

Evangelista et al. Facial expressions of pain in cats: the development and validation of a Feline Grimace Scale. Sci Rep 9, 19128 (2019)



## WHY?

- Pain-induced behavioral changes are unique in cats and can be subtle

## WHO?

- The instrument has been developed and validated to be used by veterinarians
- It is currently under testing for use by other veterinary care professionals

## WHAT?

- The Feline Grimace Scale is a simple method of acute pain assessment. It is based on changes in facial expressions and can be easily and quickly performed in the clinical setting
- It differentiates painful and non-painful cats and response to analgesic treatment

## WHEN?

- The FGS is used for acute pain assessment in cats with medical, surgical or oral pain, etc.
- Pain assessment should be performed as often as needed and on a case-by-case basis

## HOW?

- There are five action units (AU): ear position, orbital tightening, muzzle tension, whiskers position and head position
- Each unit is scored: 0 (absent), 1 (moderately present) or 2 (present)
- The final score is calculated by the sum of scores divided by the maximum possible scores
- Analgesic treatment is suggested when the final score is 4/10 or 0.4/1.0

### 0 = AU is absent



- Ears facing forward
- Eyes opened
- Muzzle relaxed (round shape)
- Whiskers loose and curved
- Head above the shoulder line

### 1 = AU is moderately present\*



- Ears slightly pulled apart
- Eyes partially open
- Muzzle mildly tense
- Whiskers slightly curved or straight
- Head aligned with the shoulder line

\*The score of 1 can be also given when there is uncertainty over the presence or absence of the AU

### 2 = AU is markedly present



- Ears flattened and rotated outwards
- Squinted eyes
- Muzzle tense (elliptical shape)
- Whiskers straight and moving forward
- Head below the shoulder line or tilted down (chin towards the chest)

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felinegrimacescale@umontreal.ca

Faculté de médecine vétérinaire  
Université de Montréal

Access the training manual  
bit.ly/FGSmanual



Access the video  
bit.ly/FGSvideo



Acknowledgement

zoetis

# Quality of Life Scale (HHHHMM Scale)

Using a scale of 0 to 10 (0 = Unacceptable, 10 = Excellent), patients can be evaluated for their quality of life.

## Score Criterion

0-10 **Hurt**—Is the patient in pain, including distress from difficulty in breathing? Can the pet's pain be successfully managed? Is oxygen necessary?

0-10 **Hunger**—Is the pet eating enough? Does hand-feeding help? Does the pet require a feeding tube?

0-10 **Hydration**—Is the pet dehydrated? Are subcutaneous fluids once or twice daily enough to resolve the problem? Are they well tolerated?

0-10 **Hygiene**—The pet should be kept brushed and clean, particularly after elimination. Does the pet have pressure sores?

0-10 **Happiness**—Does the pet express joy and interest? Is he responsive to things around him (family, toys, etc)? Is the pet depressed, lonely, anxious, bored, or afraid? Can the pet's bed be near the kitchen and moved near family activities to minimize isolation?

0-10 **Mobility**—Can the pet get up without assistance? Does the pet need human or mechanical help (eg, a cart)? Does she feel like going for a walk? Is she having seizures or stumbling? Note: Some caregivers feel euthanasia is preferable to amputation, yet an animal with limited mobility may still be alert and responsive, and can have a good quality of life as long as the family is committed to quality care.

0-10 **More Good Days than Bad**—When bad days outnumber good days, the pet's suffering is appreciable and quality of life might be too compromised. When a healthy human-animal bond is no longer possible, the caregiver must be made aware that the end is near.

**Total: A total of > 35 points is acceptable quality of life for pets.**

Adapted from Canine and Feline Geriatric Oncology: Honoring the Human–Animal

After discussing goals and how we will measure improvement we need to be very clear about what the client should expect to see after the first acupuncture treatment. Options include:

1-NOTHING!

2-INCREASED PAIN

3-IMPROVEMENT IN MOBILITY

4-FATIGUE

5-INCREASED ENERGY

**ANY OF THESE ARE NORMAL!**

## Common goals

Increased activity

Decreased reliance on NSAIDS or opioids

Decreased pain

Decreased severity/frequency of seizures

Improved appetite

- Subsequent acupuncture appointments are 30 minutes long
- Generally most patients see improvement within 3-5 visits
- Rule of thumb is that it takes  $\frac{1}{2}$  the time you have been struggling with an issue to improve it with acupuncture
- I generally ask my clients to email me the day after a treatment and let me know what they noticed- good, bad or nothing
- Based on response and diagnosis we generally see patients back in 7-14 days for 2-3 treatments then try stretching them out

# Common Integrative Therapies

Omega 3 fatty acids-Welactin

Adequan

Green lipped mussel supplements

Laser therapy

Assisi loop-PEMF

Antioxidant supplements-

-Senelife:**Phosphatidylserine:**Improves nerve-cell communication and helps this process continue working effectively.

**Pyridoxine:**Essential for normal brain development, function and health

**Ginkgo Biloba Extract:**Improves cerebral blood flow, increase glucose metabolism, and has a strong antioxidant effect

**Resveratrol:**Antioxidant which protects neurons from toxic substances which can cause cell death

**D-alpha-tocopherol:**Natural form of Vitamin E with strong antioxidant action and proven effectiveness on cognitive decline

# Assistive devices

Help'em up harness-<https://helpemup.com/>



IVDD-L'il Back Bracer-<https://lilbackbracer.com/products/lil-back-bracer>



## Assistance with slipping-

- 1.PawFriction kits- adhesive with non slip granules
- 2.Non slip booties
- 3.Non skid pads
- 4.Toe Grips



# Incontinence issues

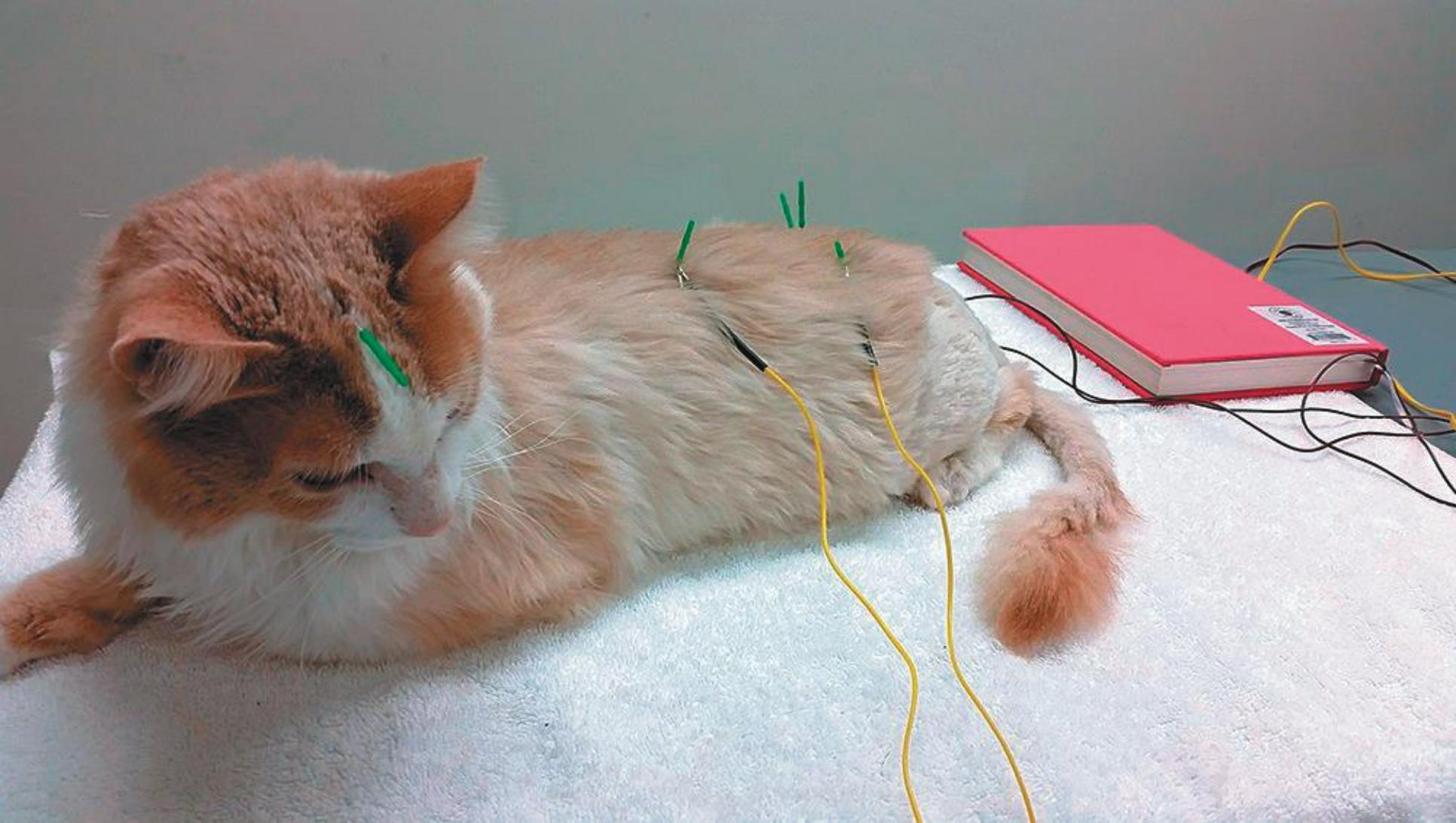
Belly bands- <https://dogquality.com/collections>

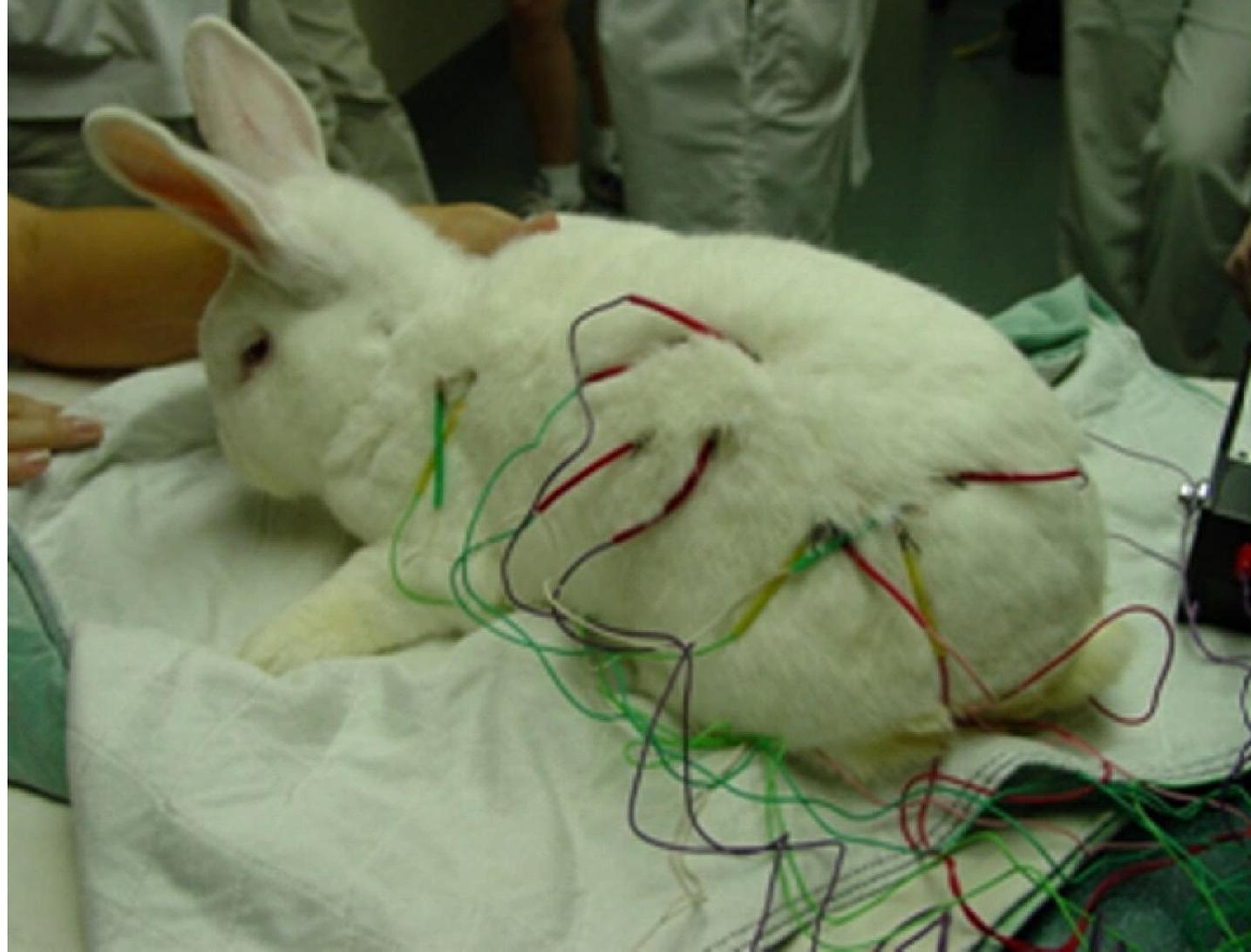




# Carts







# Case Studies











Westfield Veterinary Hospital  
Pelvis - Extended VD 9/10/20 03:11:15 PM

Forever Home Dog Rescue  
Hartlow  
9/6/17 Neutered Male  
Microchip Id: 9000074001891614

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