

COMPLAINT NUMBER	21/025
ADVERTISER	Holistic Acupuncture & Meridian Massage Therapy
ADVERTISEMENT	Holistic Acupuncture & Meridian Massage Therapy Unaddressed Mail
DATE OF MEETING	19 February 2021
OUTCOME	Settled

Advertisement: The Holistic Acupuncture & Meridian Massage Therapy brochure offered various healing treatments including massage, meridian therapy, guasha, acupuncture and moxibustion.

The Chair ruled the complaint was Settled.

Complaint: Jeannie Millar has a professional business she calls Holistic Acupuncture and Meridian Massage Therapy in New Brighton, Christchurch. She charges up to \$60 per hour, but may earn more than that when her ACC payments are added to her ACC surcharge. Millar seems to be stretching the limits of what could be called Acupuncture, so I do not think any of my three complaints are examples of acupuncture. They do not involve needles. If they all were acupuncture, then it is logical that all practitioners of any unproven treatments can call themselves acupuncturists in order to avoid having to provide evidence for their claims. I am sure ACC will not fund guasha or moxibustion, In her flyer, Millar describes her treatment rationale with this bold statement, Our bodies have energy pathways called meridians that connect our organs to each other and various parts of the body This is what we now term misinformation, and would mislead anyone who takes the statement seriously.

In her flyer, she makes these three therapeutic claims (and several more) for which she provides no evidence.

1. The Guasha involves scraping the skin with a massage tool (stone in this case)...until the skin turns red with the damage. Millar claims this improves digestion, respiration, body temperature regulation All of those three claims could be tested scientifically.
2. Moxibustion consists of burning mugwort close to the skin, along with a risk of burns to the skin. Millar claims this will relieve congestion and [cause] increased immunity. A simple test can be set up as whether patients are less susceptible to infections following moxibustion compared with a similar procedure (burning a different herb). I doubt such a test has been carried out under proper scientific controls. Moxibustion has been regarded as separate from acupuncture since at least the Ming Dynasty [Rheumatology, Volume 43, Issue 5, May 2004, Pages 662-663]

3. Mineral Lamp procedure I don't think anyone could call this a treatment, as there is no rationale for its medical use. I doubt it has ever been part of traditional Chinese medicine let alone acupuncture. Yet Millar claims the lamp somehow miraculously transfers minerals from the lamp's plate into the bodies of her clients. There, apparently these minerals now miraculously has positive results on over 100 known medical conditions. This is obviously a claim that cannot be supported by evidence.

Incidentally, acupuncture seems to have originated as a form of bloodletting.

[Rheumatology, Volume 43, Issue 5, May 2004, Pages 662-663. And there are plenty more references to attest to that.]

The relevant provisions were Therapeutic and Health Advertising Code - Principle 1, Principle 2, Rule 2(a)

The Chair noted the Complainant's concerns the advertisement made claims that were not substantiated and appeared to be misleading.

The Chair acknowledged the Advertiser had removed the advertisement after receiving the complaint.

Given the Advertiser's co-operative engagement with the process and the self-regulatory action taken in removing the advertisement, the Chair said it would serve no further purpose to place the matter before the Complaints Board.

The Chair ruled the matter was Settled.

Chair's Ruling: Complaint **Settled**

APPEAL INFORMATION

According to the procedures of the Advertising Standards Complaints Board, all decisions are able to be appealed by any party to the complaint. Information on our Appeal process is on our website www.asa.co.nz. Appeals must be made in writing via email or letter within 14 calendar days of receipt of this decision.