

Health & Fitness

Changing the Face of Aging

Facial acupuncture not only firms the skin but also addresses the cause of age-related health issues

By June Fakkert
Epoch Times Staff

Mary Elizabeth Wakefield is a licensed acupuncturist, teacher, author, and creator of the system of Constitutional Facial Acupuncture. She explained to Epoch Times, how this system helps promote healthy aging.

Epoch Times: Is Constitutional Facial Acupuncture for beauty, or health, or both?

Mary Elizabeth Wakefield: Constitutional Facial Acupuncture treatments focus on both health concerns and beauty. They target facial wrinkles, frown lines, eye bags, double chin, and sagging neck, as well as poor digestion, gynecological imbalances, menopause, and sinus congestion, among other syndromes. The face is the mirror of the health and well being of the body.

Epoch Times: What does “constitutional” refer to?

Ms. Wakefield: “Constitutional” refers to the fact that I treat constitutionally, i.e., I treat the body and its basic patterns of imbalance. Many prospective patients think (a misapprehension that is reinforced by the unfortunate use of the term “cosmetic” acupuncture) that only the face is needled.



Mary Elizabeth Wakefield

The meridians, pathways of energy, flow throughout the body, and rise to the head and face. Everything is connected, in relationship, and not compartmentalized; unlike the allopathic philosophy of Western medicine, this is an integrative and holistic approach. For example, acid reflux (rising heat in the stomach), can cause redness or blemishes on acupuncture points on the facial landscape that relate to the stomach.

Epoch Times: Can you describe what a treatment with Constitutional Facial Acupuncture is?

Ms. Wakefield: A typical treatment begins with the practitioner’s assessment of the patient’s medical intake form. The patient washes their face with a natural organic cleanser, and the practitioner takes the pulse and looks at the tongue to discern the nature of the patient’s imbalances.

Needles are inserted into the body to support the constitution. Then, fine needles are placed at a variety of acupuncture points on the face, neck, and around the eye to stimulate the body’s natural energy or “qi.” In addition to acupuncture points, specific muscle groups are targeted to lift, tone, and tighten the skin. The needles also stimulate blood circulation which improves the complexion.

After 25–35 minutes, the facial needles are removed, and a natural Chinese herbal mask is placed on the face to close the pores and firm the skin. The body needles are removed, the herbal mask is washed off the face, and a natural cream, mixed with organic essential oils, is massaged into the skin.

Jade rollers massage the cream further into the skin, and even out the complexion. Finally, an organic essential oil-infused hydrosol is sprayed onto the face to complete the treatment.

Hydrosol is the aromatic water that remains after the distillation of an essential oil. The aromatic water is sprayed onto the face, and depending upon the particular oil, it either hydrates, cools, or balances the complexion.

Epoch Times: Do the needles hurt? Do they leave marks?

COURTESY OF MARY ELIZABETH WAKEFIELD

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Ms. Wakefield: I use fine, delicate, Japanese needles of the highest quality available, and they are virtually painless. The insertion of the needle may cause a temporary reddening of the skin at the site, which means that qi and blood are flowing to the face, and that the treatment is working.

Epoch Times: What changes happen to the facial skin after treatment?

Ms. Wakefield: After the treatment, there is an increased glow to the complexion, the face is more open, there is more clarity in the eyes (what Chinese medicine refers to as “shen”), wrinkles start to lessen, and the skin is more radiant.

Epoch Times: How many treatments do people need before getting these benefits?

Ms. Wakefield: A patient typically needs 12–15 treatment to see more lasting results. The treatments are cumulative. By the fifth to seventh session, the patient looks like they have been on a vacation; jowls and the neck appear lifted and toned. They not only look better, but also feel

healthier, due to the constitutional treatment approach.

Epoch Times: How does inserting needles into your skin create these benefits?

Ms. Wakefield: Needling the face stimulates qi and blood flow, which carries nutrients to the cells. The body interprets the insertion of the needle as a positive microtrauma, and stimulates fibroblasts, [connective tissues] that are the precursor to collagen/elastin. At present, no research has been conducted to support a definite link between facial acupuncture needling and collagen/elastin production. However, in my experience, the skin looks plumper, fuller, and more youthful after Constitutional Facial Acupuncture treatments.

Epoch Times: What health benefits have your patients experienced from treatments?

Ms. Wakefield: The treatments improve skin conditions such as acne, eczema, hyperpigmentation (brown spots), as well as gynecological issues—premenstrual tension (PMS), menopause, perimenopause, thyroid imbalances, digestive problems, and psychological issues like depression and low self-esteem. It reduces stress and promotes overall health and a sense of well being.

See Aging on B2



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COURTESY OF MARY ELIZABETH WAKEFIELD

Mary Elizabeth Wakefield uses a diamond to help ground and activate energy in the face of a patient. Wakefield created her Diamond Acupuncture Facial treatment for the 2005 Academy Awards in Los Angeles, where she offered diamond-themed treatments to well-known actors, their managers, and other celebrities.

ASK A DOCTOR

Going Gluten-Free

Is there any risk or downside associated with following a gluten-free or grain-free diet if you are not highly sensitive to or allergic to gluten? Is there any benefit?

Dr. Ann Corson: Anyone can benefit from removing wheat and all glutinous grains from their diets. Gliadin is the portion of gluten that causes intestinal damage in genetically susceptible people with celiac disease.

But, gliadin is not the only part of wheat that damages health. Seeds of the grass family, e.g. rice, wheat, spelt, and rye, have exceptionally high levels of defensive glycoproteins known as lectins. These lectins are particularly resistant to degradation, surviving cooking, fermentation, and digestion.

Wheat lectin, also called wheat germ agglutinin, is particularly inflammatory. Wheat germ agglutinin is tiny and passes easily through the intestinal wall creat-

COURTESY OF DR. ANN CORSON
Dr. Ann Corson

Changing the Face of Aging

Aging continued from B1

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Epoch Times: Are there any risks? Are there certain conditions that make it inadvisable to do Constitutional Facial Acupuncture?

Ms. Wakefield: It is not advisable to treat patients with hemophilia or severe immune deficiency, Cushing's, Addison's or Graves' disease. Caution should be taken with patients that have migraine headaches, hypertension, or diabetes.

Epoch Times: What was the ancient Chinese ideal of beauty? How is it different from our modern ideal?

Ms. Wakefield: In ancient China, ideal beauty transcended merely esthetic or cosmetic considerations. They defined a beautiful face as a "clear" face, which expressed "shen," light radiating from

In ancient China, ideal beauty transcended merely esthetic or cosmetic considerations. They defined a beautiful face as a 'clear' face, which expressed 'shen,' light radiating from the eyes.

the eyes. They recognized the connection between optimum health, longevity, and physical beauty, and used herbs, diet, massage (Tui-na), qi gong and acupuncture to preserve beauty and extend the longevity of their patients.

In marked contrast to popular consensus in our society, beauty was not believed to be the sole province of the young and slender. There was no age or weight limit to a person with a beautiful face or spirit.

Epoch Times: How did you develop Constitutional Facial Acupuncture?

Ms. Wakefield: Constitutional Facial Acupuncture is a direct outgrowth of my 30-plus years experience as a healing practitioner, although the impetus initially came from my career as an opera singer. I saw my colleagues confronting the challenges of remaining "young and beautiful" as they ripened as artists, and wanted to offer them, and other women and men in the public eye, a holistic alternative to the invasive and toxic procedures of plastic surgery and Botox, etc., that have now become rampant in the entertainment and political arenas. I began developing my approach almost immediately after my graduation from acupuncture school.

I am very much an advocate of "less is more" when it comes to facial needling. The treatment protocols that I have developed for my new book, *Constitutional Facial Acupuncture* (Elsevier UK, 2014) are gentle, using very small 1/2 inch needles.

All of the treatment protocols that I have developed approach the renewal of the face through a re-harmonization of the muscle structure, and each treatment is tailored to the needs of the individual patient.

Epoch Times: Can you explain the diamond treatment you created?

Ms. Wakefield: I created the Diamond Acupuncture Facial™ for the Academy Awards. A small faceted diamond set in

a gold cap is placed upon the head of the acupuncture needle before it is inserted. The diamond needle acts as a lightning rod and can ground and activate qi in the face. For example, when inserted at the location of the acupuncture point between the eyebrows called Yintang, it can alleviate depression by stimulating endorphins.

Epoch Times: Anything else readers should know?

Ms. Wakefield: I highly recommend this both ancient and modern "healthy aging" treatment that is natural and noninvasive. After a series of treatments, most patients look and feel 5–10 years younger. Constitutional Facial Acupuncture is less expensive than cosmetic surgery, non-toxic, and draws upon the ancient Chinese wisdom related to longevity, beauty, and balance.

Epoch Times: Do you do Constitutional Facial Acupuncture yourself?

Ms. Wakefield: I perform these treatments on myself regularly as part of my own "healthy aging" regimen.

Mary Elizabeth Wakefield teaches seminars to practitioners all over the world and practices acupuncture in New York City. She recently published a book on Constitutional Facial Acupuncture. www.chiakra.com

Wheat lectin, also called wheat germ agglutinin, is particularly inflammatory.

ing inflammation in the body and negatively affecting the pancreas, thyroid, gonads, and intestines. It may also damage the immune and nervous systems. Wheat germ agglutinin itself also appears to, independent of gliadin, contribute to the development of celiac disease. Grain lectins also seem to create insulin and leptin resistance, thereby contributing to the obesity epidemic.

These negative effects of gluten and lectin are magnified after anyone has been ill with common viral or bacterial infections and has taken prescription or over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medicines such as ibuprofen or aspirin, as these cause increased intestinal permeability or "leaky gut."

People who refrain from grains often see a dramatic reduction in body weight, better blood sugar control, a significant decrease in arthritic pain, relief of intestinal symptoms such as irritable bowel and reflux, as well as an improvement in mood, sleep, and energy.

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